Benson files candidacy for Precinct 3 of House Representatives. PAGE 2
CUC, NMTech establish new partnership. PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

$1

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Palacios intervenes in SMA, CPA fee dispute

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Palacios

Hocog

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has intervened in the ongoing fee dispute between Star Marianas Airlines Inc. and the Commonwealth Ports Authority after the former struck panic in the communities of Tinian and Rota following its notice of intent to cease operations come October.

See PALACIOS on Page 4

$80M approved for CNMI to build out broadband

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

Sablan

The CNMI last week was awarded nearly $80 million to improve the broadband infrastructure on the islands following the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's approval of Vol. 2 of the CNMI Broadband Policy and Development Office's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Initial Proposal.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) said the close to $80-million

See $80M on Page 4

HANMI occupancy at 41% in June 2024

» BGRT less than 50% of pre-pandemic levels

Seo

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands reported 41% average occupancy rate among 11 member hotels for June 2024, a 12% decrease compared to 47% average occupancy among 11 hotels in June 2023.

A total of 25,862 of 62,972 available room nights sold during June 2024 compared to 29,275 of 62,619 available rooms sold in June 2023. The average room rate was $121.79 compared to $131.03 last June.

"May and June are typically

See HANMI on Page 4

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

Last Thursday, a group of marine operators who have been providing Mañagaha Island transport services to locals and tourists for years piled into a conference room at the Department of Public Lands office in Dandan in hopes of having an open discussion about DPL's proposed changes to its rules and regulations.

OPERATORS ON DPL PROPOSED RULES AND REGS

'There would be no choice but to shut down'

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Local marine operators have banded together to meet with the Department of Public Lands to discuss its recently proposed "new" rule and regulations that would essentially limit the use of Mañagaha Island to the master concessionaire and select operators.

Last Thursday, a group of marine operators who have been providing Mañagaha transport services to locals and tourists for years piled into a conference room at the DPL office in Dandan in hopes of having an open discussion about DPL's proposed changes to its rules and regulations.

Although invited by the group, DPL staff prohibited the media from joining the meeting stating that it was "informal" and would host a formal meeting soon.

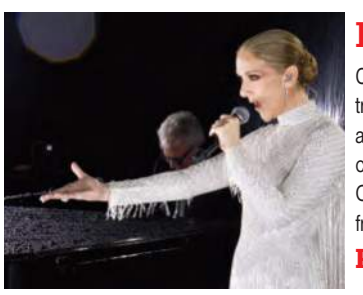
Saipan Tribune managed to speak to one of the ma-

See THERE on Page 4

INSIDE

LOCAL
The Marianas Visitors Authority is targeting a new generation of Japanese travelers with their campaign "Marianas Blues" launched this month.
PAGE 5

BUSINESS
The Saipan Chamber of Commerce's August general membership meeting has been scheduled for Aug. 7 2024, from 11:30am to 1pm at Charley's Room, Pacific Islands Club Saipan.
PAGE 10



LIFE & STYLE
Celine Dion made a triumphant return Friday with a very public performance: closing out the Paris Olympics' opening ceremony from the Eiffel Tower.
PAGE 11

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

Benson files candidacy for House Precinct 3

By RACQUEL H. FLOYD
raxfloyd@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Del Benson files his candidacy as an independent candidate for Precinct 3 in the House of Representatives at the Commonwealth Election Commission last Wednesday afternoon with his grandchildren Jade, Ande, and Bo.

Del Benson, who announced his candidacy last May, officially filed his candidacy with the Commonwealth Election Commission last Wednesday. He's running as an independent.

According to the 65-year-old Benson, the idea of running for a Precinct 3 seat in the House of Representatives began in January or February this year after a conversation with his son.

"I've had a lot to say, I've been in various businesses and we don't know what to do here...I thought, well, I don't have all the answers, but if I can encourage and spawn and create some outside thinking, [we] tend to disrupt our past because we, you know about our successes, the past does not dictate the success in the future... The Japanese showed that for sure, and then we had the Chinese bubble, we don't have any bubbles left so we're in a world of hurt."

Instead of the usual roadside waving, Benson has employed a "sit down and chat banner" campaign since mid-June and this unusual setup has caught the attention of some.

"I usually go there during rush hour and I set up off and on different places on the island. I'm making a new banner to go on the other side so I can change it and catch both traffic directions. The idea with that one is I used to be known, but the younger generation doesn't know me. I was a schoolteacher and a professional photographer, so I shot a lot of weddings, funerals, and activities. Well, I got really bad feet, and engagement's very different from waiving," said Benson.

Benson believes his advantage is that he could say whatever locals are afraid to say which led him to his slogan "Your Words, My Voice." He also focuses on cooperation and integrity rather than constant attacks and blame.

"I see myself as a disruptor, but I've got to understand the importance of cooperation. You get nowhere if you don't cooperate, but you know I can use a little moniker or the little a buzzword. Your words and my voice because I can say things that locals usually can't say to each other because of the pressure and the obligation in the family. So. I can call things easier than a lot of other people. I'm vocal, but I'm going to be cooperative. I'm going to hold to my integrity. I'm not going to look at the game of politics, it's a blood sport, and you have people attacking each other right and left. We scream about corruption, while we're corrupt if we benefit. Let's focus on what needs to be done. We can go chasing after everybody in the past. I mean, there's some things that are bad enough that needs to be brought up and addressed, but a lot of stuff is like, you know, this whole chasing the last administration, what else have you done?" said Benson.

Benson added that instead of dwelling on past corruption, attention should be given to addressing the current issues and moving forward. The focus should be on actions that contribute to economic development and progress.

Benson graduated with a degree in BS Vocational Education in 1986 and finished his master's degree in 1988. He arrived on Saipan in 1991 and worked as a cooperative education teacher at Marianas High School.

He said when he arrived on Saipan, the economy was booming. He was teaching and doing photography which is what he considers his legacy.

He opened La Mode Isla in 2008 in Garapan (where I Love Saipan is now located), but his involvement in the business lasted just six months due to a conflict with business partners. He then brought in The Curve, a women's fitness club that operated for two years. Benson also used to have an English school and dabbled in real estate.

Based on experience, Benson said failures are valuable learning opportunities and that success alone doesn't provide an understanding of one's abilities. He added difficult times can lead to valuable insights and growth.

"You don't know your limits and you think you're really good... I mean that's what I said, when we started La Mode Isla at a very difficult time...you really test your business skills when the economy is down and also if you have partners to get along, but we didn't make it, so it was a good lesson."

Benson also advocates for more autonomy and less regulation in government, as he expressed the need to revisit the immigration policies of 2010-2011. He criticizes the current federal oversight and its impact on development.

"How can we develop if our hands are tied behind our backs then we are a little dinky island 6,000 miles away from the U.S. mainland. We have limited resources, and for that, we have too much regulation from the U.S. so we need more autonomy."

He added that increased federal control leads to restrictions and limitations on local decision-making.

"We need to bring back some of the [old] policies because we won't survive unless we've got economic development unless we're just going to be in the hands of the feds and with the hands of the feds, does it mean they're going to dictate to us or control us?"

Among the plans Benson will want to implement when he's elected, include increased public land usage and future planning as he proposes reduced prices for individuals to maintain small gardens or parks on public lands. He also expressed concern about the lack of replacement for flame trees that have a lifespan of 30-40 years.

He also said the Garapan Fishing Base should be managed as a state park for the community's benefit and wants the government to preserve unique island landmarks. Benson also cited safety concerns at the Grotto to give better accessibility and safety to tourists and tour guides alike.

World
Breastfeeding Week
BREASTFEEDING CHAMPIONS
What is your most favorite part about breastfeeding, and your least favorite part about breastfeeding?
"My favorite part of breastfeeding would be having that emotional and physical connection with my baby. It's a very special feeling; especially, knowing that you will be the only one who gets to experience it.
Adding onto that, as days go on and you see how much your baby grows, you'll feel proud of yourself and take pride in how your baby's growth came from just breastfeeding alone; without any help from formula. On the other hand, my least favorite part of it would be how tiring it may get...But with enough perseverance, it gets much easier."
What is a breastfeeding accessory you feel contributed to your breastfeeding success and why?
"One of the biggest breastfeeding accessories that contributed to my success would be a pump and milk bags. I assure you that it truly helps, especially when you long for a decent amount of sleep or if you want to get some time to yourself. Without mommy around, a trusted family member or friend will be able to warm up your pumped milk for the baby. The biggest support system I had was from my family and my partner. Without their guidance, I don't think I would have succeeded in my breastfeeding journey."
Josephine Lizama,
Saipan, CNMI
Mom of 1
WIC CNMI
Learn more about WIC Breastfeeding Support Services at (670) 664-4084 or (670) 236-8741 !
www.chcc.health
This AD is funded by USDA 202424W100347
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP24-CHCC/ CAS-024

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: AUGUST 12th, 2024 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)
PROCUREMENT OF UNINTERRUPTED POWER SUPPLY (UPS)
(Outright Purchase, Shipping, Delivery, Installation, Training, and Commissioning)
for CHC Hospital / Radiology Department

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.HEALTH]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP24-CHCC/ FACILITY-025

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: AUGUST 12th , 2024 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)
PROCUREMENT OF 500KW CONTAINERIZED GENERATOR

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

CUC, NMTech establish new partnership

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NMTech and CUC staff pose for a photo following the signing of an MOU that enhances the partnership between both organization.

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. and Northern Marianas Technical Institute have formalized their commitment to collaborative educational initiatives through a memorandum of understanding signing.

Last July 17, CUC and NMTech held an MOU signing at the NMTech campus to officiate their commitment to collaborating with one another in terms of educational initiatives.

The MOU paves the way for enhanced opportunities for individuals seeking hands-on experience in trades.

Among those present at the MOU signing were CUC Human Resources manager Francisco Matsunaga Jr. and NMTech chief executive officer Jodina Attao.

The event was attended by CUC and NMTech staff, underscoring this partnership's collaborative spirit.

Under this agreement, NMTech will allow students to intern at various CUC facilities, where they will gain practical insights and valuable skills in utility operations, contributing to the growth of employment in trades.

"The official signing of the MOU between the Northern Marianas Technical Institute and the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. marks a significant milestone in fostering practical experience alongside academic learning," said Attao.

Matsunaga, for his part, said CUC is delighted to formalize its partnership with NMTech.

"This partnership underscores the importance of bridging educational theory with real-world application, preparing students for the dynamic demands of their future careers. By linking NMTech's educational programs with hands-on experience provided by industry leaders like the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., this collaboration ensures that students gain valuable insights and skills directly relevant to their fields. Such initiatives are crucial in developing a skilled workforce to drive innovation and contribute to the region's economic growth," he said.

Matsunaga added that this collaboration highlights CUC's commitment to nurturing local talent and preparing the next generation of professionals in the utilities sector.

"Through internships and hands-on training, students can apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings, preparing them for successful careers. This partnership is expected to enrich educational offerings and contribute to the overall development of skilled professionals in the CNMI. Both organizations are committed to promoting innovation, sustainability, and excellence in the utilities sector through collaborative efforts and practical training opportunities," he said.

For more information about CUC and NMTech, visit www.cucgov.org and www.nmtechcnmi.org, respectively.

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: AUGUST 2ND, 2024 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

HOSPITAL PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM (HPP)
MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS (MRC)

RFP24-CHCC/HPP-MRC-021
"NEED ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION-MRC PROGRAM"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.HEALTH]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

Job Vacancy Announcement

ANAKS GENERAL MANAGER

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Bachelor's degree from a U.S.- accredited institution, or equivalent
2. Four or more years' experience in a management position
3. Computer literate, proficient in Microsoft Office applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), email, Internet searches. Knowledge of accounting software, Quicken, a plus.
4. Strong organizational, supervisory, problem-solving and communication skills
5. U.S. citizen/Permanent resident
6. Multilingual a plus (Japanese, Korean, Mandarin Chinese)

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Maintain accurate, up-to-date financial records according to generally accepted accounting principles.
2. Provide financial statements to the Board of Directors as requested.
3. Ensure compliance with all federal and local laws, tax requirements, annual corporate reports, and other reporting requirements.
4. Responsible for determining staffing requirements, hiring, training, supervising, and evaluating all ANAKS employees, including establishing working hours, ensuring the payment of wages and deduction of employment taxes, obtaining Workers Compensation insurance, preparing an annual personnel budget, and managing all other aspects of ANAKS staffing.
5. Prepare and distribute monthly billing statements to all homeowners and/or tenants, as applicable.
6. Establish an effective and timely system for collecting owners'/tenants' monthly management fees and other receivables due.
7. Monitor water and electricity usage for all units and prepare billings accordingly.
8. Ensure efficient, prompt payment to all vendors, suppliers, contractors, etc.
9. Establish and implement maintenance schedules for reverse osmosis water system, generators, pumps, sewer system, swimming pool, tennis court, and other ANAKS equipment and infrastructure.
10. Maintain an inventory of necessary spare replacement parts to ensure smooth operation of water system, generators, swimming pool, and other equipment as needed.
11. Ensure that all common areas including the swimming pool area, garbage houses, roadways, tennis court, walkways, etc. are clean, well-maintained and in good condition, and grounds and landscaping are attractive and regularly maintained.
12. Keep the Board informed of major preventive maintenance costs, emergencies, repairs, and replacements per the Board's Expenditure Policy.
13. Conduct routine inspections of the exterior of all units and make recommendations for repairs and improvements.
14. Work closely with, and provide administrative support to the Board of Directors (attend board and committee meetings, draft meeting minutes, enforce policies/bylaws/regulations, budgeting) to continuously improve and beautify the complex.
15. Develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for day-to-day operations, maintenance, procurement of products and services, financial management, etc.; and human resources tasks such as staff performance evaluations, employee development/training, employee recognition, disciplinary and grievance procedures, etc.
16. Other duties as assigned by the President or Board of Directors.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Interested candidates should submit their resume, cover letter, recent police clearance, and professional references via email to: office1@anaks.net by August 7, 2024. Please include "General Manager Application" in the subject line.

ARMATECH

Parking Management System Installer

Tel: (670) 234-8895 | Email: armatech.saipan@gmail.com
Mobile: (670) 287-5525 / (670) 783-8895

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (HIT)

RFP24-CHCC/HIT-023

INSTALLATION OF UNINTERRUPTIBLE POWER SUPPLIES AND TRANSFORMERS INTO CHCC INTERMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION FRAMES SITES

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, NMIAC Subchapter 140-80.1-205(1), CHCC hereby seeks the services of qualified Contractor to provide services to the Health Information Technology (HIT) Unit thru **RFP24-CHCC/HIT-023.**

The Request for Proposals will be available on July 24th, 2024 online at www.chcc.health, navigate to the RFP tab on the left navigation bar, click on the URL for this **RFP24-CHCC/HIT-023.**

A mandatory on-site assessment will be held on **July 26th, 2024 at 9:00AM** at the CHCC Conference Room 4, located right across Gift Shop. The Statement of Confidentiality will be collected prior to the actual on-site assessment.

Contractors shall submit proposals and all supporting documents to Corazon P. Ada, Director, CHCC Division of Procurement and Supply Office located at the Main Administrative Building or via email at procurement@chcc.health no later than: **1000hrs (10:00 am) Chamorro Standard Time on August 5th, 2024.**

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

RE-ANNOUNCEMENT
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

OPENING DATE: July 02, 2024 CLOSING DATE: Until Filled

NMHC JVA No.	Positions:	Salary
2024-006	Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	$90,000.00 to $100,000.00 per annum (UNGRADED)

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be accessed at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net . NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

HSEM announces issuance of PIV-I Access cards

The CNMI Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management announced the issuance of the Personal Identity Verification-Interoperable (PIV-I) Access cards to Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov.r David M. Apatang. The PIV-I issuance will take place at the Emergency Operations Center on July 29, 2024, at 10:30am.

Palacios and Apatang will be officially presented with their PIV-I Access cards by HSEM special assistant Franklin R. Babauta.

The PIV-I Access card represents a significant advancement in the security infrastructure of the CNMI, enhancing the identification and authentication process for key officials within the CNMI government. The PIV-I Access card provides enhanced security features, including multi-factor authentication, identity verification, increased cybersecurity, and interoperability between local, state, and federal partner agencies.

This milestone marks a vital step in ensuring the safety and security of the CNMI's leadership in emergencies and disasters.

"Today marks a significant milestone for the CNMI as we implement our first Personal Identity Verification- Interoperable (PIV-I) program. This initiative enhances our security and ensures a higher standard of safety and efficiency for our operations. Our commitment to protecting our community remains unwavering, and this program is a testament to our dedication and commitment to participate with our federal partners," said Babauta.

HSEM will be the first agency within the government to implement the program, as the program progresses additional agencies will receive the PIV-I Access cards. More information will be provided as the system becomes more available within the CNMI government.

For more information or any questions, do not hesitate to contact the CNMI Office Homeland Security and Emergency Management public information officer Bernard Villagomez at (670) 287-7106 or b.villagomez@cnmihsem.gov.mp. ***(PR)***

THERE

From page 1

rine operators, Chung Lee of BC Inc., who expressed her heartfelt disappointment in the proposed rule and regulations stating that ultimately, if these rules are implemented, local marine operators will eventually have to close up shop.

"If these newly proposed rules and regulations passes (the regulations proposed by DPL), I want the general public to know that majority of the marine sports operators—like boat owners who take tourists and locals to Mañagaha—would have to close their doors and their businesses. My main point is that majority of local businesses would have to close down, local businesses that have been on the island for 20, 30, some even 45 years, we would have to close our doors. With local businesses closing, it's not going to be good for anybody," she said.

Lee expressed that should DPL move forward with implementing these new rules, employees will lose jobs and less opportunities will be available for young adults looking to return home and find jobs on the island.

"It'll affect our employees because they would lose their jobs, and their families would be affected also. This is not just for us, but it's for the future. Businesses closing means less opportunities for college graduates. We send our children off to college, even if they want to come back, there would be less opportunities for them," she said.

Lee noted that the local courts ruled on a similar issue back when Tasi Tours was the master concessionaire of Managaha.

"I don't understand why DPL would want to change the rules and regulations. The same thing happened 11 years ago when Tasi was the master concessionaire for Mañagaha. They, too, tried to get help from DPL to change the rules and regulations just as the concessionaire is doing now. There was a court judgment, however, that prevented that from happening, as long as all transactions are done outside of Mañagaha. We have been following those rules, we don't solicit passengers from Mañagaha, we don't conduct any commercial activities on the island. Everything, we've done outside of Mañagaha. We're merely dropping customers off at Mañagaha so they can enjoy the facility and we pick them up to bring them back to Saipan," she said.

Former congressman Richard Lizama set up the meeting between the marine operators and DPL stating he just wants to support the businesses.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, DPL recently issued a public notice of proposed amendments to the commercial use of Mañagaha Island rules and regulations.

Specifically, the proposed amendments will revise existing regulatory language in regulations regarding uses and privileges and definitions.

"The CNMI Office of the Governor, DPL intends to amend the commercial use of Mañagaha rules and regulations pursuant to the procedure of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), 1 CMC section 9104(a) to restrict the consumption of outside food and beverages in the Exclusive Concession Area; restrict certain personal floatation devices in the designated swimming zone, and further define the type of 'commercial activity' that may only be provided by the main concessionaire and a limited number of sub-concessionaires mutually agreed upon by DPL and the concessionaire," said the notice.

DPL's "Commercial Use of Mañagaha Island Rules and Regulations" currently provide that all commercial activity, including conveniences such as food, beverages, recreational equipment, and the like, shall only be provided by the main concessionaire and a limited number of sub concessionaires, and allow outside food and beverages brought in by visitors for personal consumption. In addition, the regulations do not currently address the use of personal floatation devices.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

HANMI

From page 1

high season for the hotels, but this year we have a decrease in both occupancy rates and room rates compared to last year, resulting in continued low tax revenue generation and employment levels," said HANMI chair Dennis Seo. "Again, as a destination we need to take action what is within our control to reverse this decline…supporting the reinstatement of Annex VI, empowering the Marianas Visitors Authority to actively promote in the China market, and supporting flights through Commonwealth Ports Authority initiatives."

Prior to the pandemic, Annex VI under the U.S. Department of Transportation's "U.S.-China Air Transport Agreement," provided an exemption for the Marianas from the cap on the number of U.S.-China flights.

Other challenges facing the Marianas tourism economy are the strength of the U.S. dollar against the Korean won and Japanese yen, increase operational costs, intensified competition from other beach resort destinations, and the lack of a strong third source market.

Overall, tax contributions by HANMI member hotels are down 59% this calendar year-to-date compared to the same period in 2019 before the pandemic. Business gross receipt tax from room sales paid by HANMI member hotels are estimated at approximately $1.1 million so far this calendar year compared to $2.6 million paid in 2019. In addition, hotel occupancy tax paid has decreased from $7.7 million per-pandemic year-to-date compared to $3.2 million this year. In addition, employment by

HANMI member hotels has decreased from approximately 2,500 employees several years ago to 1,340 employees today.

The United World Tourism Organization predicts near complete full recovery of international tourism worldwide this year.

Hotels included in HANMI's monthly statistical report are Aqua Resort Club, Aquarius Beach Tower, Century Hotel, Coral Ocean Resort, GrandVrio Resort Saipan, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Kensington Hotel Saipan, LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort, Pacific Islands Club Saipan, Saipan World Resort, and Surfrider Resort Hotel.

HANMI was established in 1985 as a professional forum for the hospitality industry of the Marianas. HANMI also makes regular charitable donations to support non-profit organizations and tourism-related government projects. HANMI membership is open to all qualified hotels and other loading properties for tourists and affiliated business. Membership applications are available at www.saipanhotels.org. ***(PR)***

PALACIOS

From page 1

In a statement from Palacios, he said SMA's recent letter notifying the administration of its intent to cease operations due to a long-standing dispute with CPA is deeply troubling.

"The fee dispute between CPA and SMA has been a longstanding issue inherited from the previous CPA board, and, unfortunately, it remains unresolved. The letter from Star Marianas stating its intent to cease operations is deeply troubling, as air service plays an essential role in our community. The airline's services are not merely a convenience for our people, but a necessity that impacts the Commonwealth's economic growth and development, residents' access to healthcare, education, and overall quality of life," he said.

Due to this, Palacios has initiated discussions between both parties in hopes of reaching a resolve between both parties.

"I have initiated discussions with the CPA Board of Directors to seek a comprehensive briefing and to see how a mutually beneficial agreement can be reached with Star Marianas so the Commonwealth, especially residents of Rota and Tinian, are not deprived of essential air connectivity. I am also reaching out to Star Marianas and plan to meet with the company soon," he said.

"Maintaining and improving air service, along with improving and enhancing port infrastructure, remain a key priority for this administration. Lt. Gov. [David M.] Apatang and I will continue to keep the community informed of developments on this matter," Palacios added.

Over the weekend, Rota Mayor Aubry Hocog also reached out to SMA regarding the issue stating that this fee dispute is directly impacting the lives of individual who calls Rota, home.

"I write to you today with a heavy heart as I witness the ongoing dispute between Star Marianas Air and the Commonwealth Ports Authority. As the mayor of Rota, I have a deep-rooted responsibility to protect the well-being and prosperity of our community. This dispute directly impacts the lives of every resident, business owner, and visitor of our island," she said.

Hocog explains that Rota is a small community deeply reliant on air travel for economic survival, healthcare, and essential supplies.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

$80M

From page 1

funding again proves that the infrastructure funding law that passed when Democrats controlled the House and Senate in 2021 continues to benefit the Northern Marianas.

"A second installment of funding, $79,546,709.02, was awarded Wednesday to help meet President Biden's goal of connecting everyone in America with affordable, reliable, high-speed Internet service. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios said the funding 'will create new opportunities in education, healthcare, and business, helping us build a more resilient and connected CNMI...' We are one of only 24 states and territories to so far receive this full approval. Congratulations to the Commonwealth's Broadband Policy & Development Office for its continuing success!" he said in his e-kilili newsletter over the weekend.

RELATED NEWS

Apply now: Funding opportunity available for digital equity programs. PAGE 9

Along with the CNMI, NTIA also approved Utah for $317 million and the U.S. Virgin Islands for $27 million for their respective initial proposals of the BEAD program, a cornerstone of the Biden-Harris Administration's "Internet for All" initiative.

This approval enables the CNMI, Utah, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to request access to funding and begin implementation of the BEAD program—a major step toward closing the digital divide and meeting the Biden's goal of connecting everyone in America with affordable, reliable, high-speed Internet service.

"Thanks to President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Department of Commerce is ensuring everyone in Utah, the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and all across America, has access to affordable, reliable high-speed Internet," said U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo. "Congratulations to the teams in the Utah, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. We look forward to working with you all to ensure everyone in your state and territories is connected."

The BEAD program is a $42.45-billion state grant program authorized by President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The states, territories, and Washington, D.C. were allocated funding to deploy or upgrade high-speed Internet networks to ensure that everyone has access to reliable, affordable, high-speed Internet service.

Once deployment goals are met, any remaining funding can be used on high-speed internet adoption, training, and workforce development efforts, among other eligible uses.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

MVA targets millennials, Gen Z with new Japan campaign

The Marianas Visitors Authority is targeting a new generation of Japanese travelers with their campaign "Marianas Blues" launched this month.

The campaign was conceptualized and produced for the MVA by creative ad agency UltraSuperNew, whose clients have included American Express, Porsche, Heineken, and other prestigious international brands. The campaign is featured on social media platforms and bus and train stations, and it targets millennials and Gen Z adventure seekers, cultural explorers, and wellness enthusiasts.

MVA

Indigenous culture of the Marianas is featured in the Marianas Visitors Authority's new ad campaign targeting millennials and Gen Z in Japan. The campaign—"Shhh. Between You and I."—captures moments of community, nature, mindfulness, and immersion in the islands.

"This campaign is our latest effort to target a new generation of Japanese travelers, most of who have heard of Saipan and the Marianas but have never been here," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "It brings the Marianas closer to those seeking serene destinations over overcrowded tourist spots and those desiring more profound experiences rather than just sightseeing. This is something younger travelers are looking for."

Known for their blue skies and deep oceans, the Marianas offer "a chance to experience many shades of blue in a single day." Through imagery and words, the main commercial video reflects the unique charm of the islands by connecting "Marianas Blue" to various moments, times, and landscapes, conveying the quiet luxury that is unique to these islands.

"The 'Shhh. Between You and I.' campaign is refreshing and has a different vibe that will help entice the younger generation to consider a multi-island Marianas as their parents once considered Saipan, a 'must see,'" said MVA Marketing manager Thomas Kim. "The goal of this campaign is to encourage people to share this secret with those who are like-minded and those who are also seeking a new vacation destination."

The campaign conceptualization notes that millennial and Gen Z share a common eco-conscious mindset, prioritizing experiences over possessions and valuing cost performance. They are also increasingly focused on ethical living and contributing to social good. The campaign is founded on the pillars of community, nature, mindfulness, and immersion—or the CNMI. ***(PR)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: AUGUST 2nd, 2024 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

PROCUREMENT OF MOBILE DIGITAL X-RAY SYSTEM
(Outright Purchase, Shipping, Delivery, Installation, Training, and Commissioning)
for CHC Hospital / Radiology Department

RFP24-CHCC/ CAS-022

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.HEALTH]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net
Tels: (670) 234-9447 / 234-6866 / 234-7670 • Fax: (670) 234-9021

PUBLIC NOTICE

JULY 22, 2024

This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD funds.

COMBINED NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS

Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation
Saipan, MP 96950 Tel: (670) 234-9447/6866

This notice shall satisfy the above-cited two separate but related procedural notification requirements.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or after **August 07, 2024,** the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Honolulu Field Office, for the release of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (PL 93-383), as amended, to undertake the following projects and purposes in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands:

Project/Activity Type	Purpose	Location	Total Project Cost
New Construction: Community Pavilions Shelter (Rota)	Construct Community Pavilions to provide shelters and enhance Rota's municipal and community recreational activities and outdoor events.	Community and Economic Development Park Lot No. 347 R 35, Sinapalo III, Rota	$104,100.00

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the above-listed projects will not significantly impact the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, and may be examined or copied during regular work hours, Monday through Friday except CNMI or Austerity Holidays, from 7:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group, or agency disagreeing with this determination or wishing to comment on the projects may submit written comments to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950, or direct delivery to the central office in Garapan, Saipan. All comments received by **August 07, 2024, 4:30 p.m.,** will be considered by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Commenters should specify which part of this Notice they are addressing.

RELEASE OF FUNDS

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands certifies to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD Honolulu Field Office that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Governor Arnold I. Palacios consent to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process, and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office acceptance of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and related laws and authorities and allows the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands to use Program Funds.

OBJECTION TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office will accept objections to its release of funds and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands certification for a period of **fifteen days** following anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if it is on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands; (b) the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) the grant recipient has incurred cost not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of the release of funds by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures of 24 CFR Part 58 and shall be addressed to the **U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development, Honolulu Field Office, 1003 Bishop Street, Suite 2100, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813** and CPDHonolulu@hud.gov. Potential objectors should contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

/s/
Arnold I. Palacios
Governor, CNMI

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Project/Activity Type	Purpose	Location	Total Project Cost
New Construction: Multipurpose Stage (Rota)	Construct a Multipurpose Stage Facility to enhance Rota's municipal and community outdoor events and activities.	Community and Economic Development Park. Lot No. 347 R 35, Sinapalo III, Rota	$230,000.00

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the above-listed projects will not significantly impact the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Central Office in Garapan, Saipan. It may be examined or copied during regular work hours, Monday through Friday except CNMI or Austerity Holidays, from 7:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

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/s/
Arnold I. Palacios
Governor, CNMI

Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Heavy balance—Student loan forgiveness suffers another court defeat

A federal appeals court last week issued a one-sentence order granting an effort by Missouri and several other states to block the Biden administration's Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) student loan forgiveness program, dealing yet another blow to the president's push to help millions of Americans crushed by the burden of high-interest educational loans they often signed onto as teenagers.

The court's order provides no specific rationale for issuing the emergency stay, which is a stopgap while the plaintiffs seek an injunction, which itself is short of a final ruling. Why the legal acrobatics? An uncharitable explanation would be that the courts seem keen on derailing one of Biden's signature promises in advance of the November election.

This is after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a separate forgiveness program that had relied on a clear congressionally-granted authority for the federal government to forgive student loans, forcing the White House and the Department of Education to keep increasingly limited parts of their debt relief program.

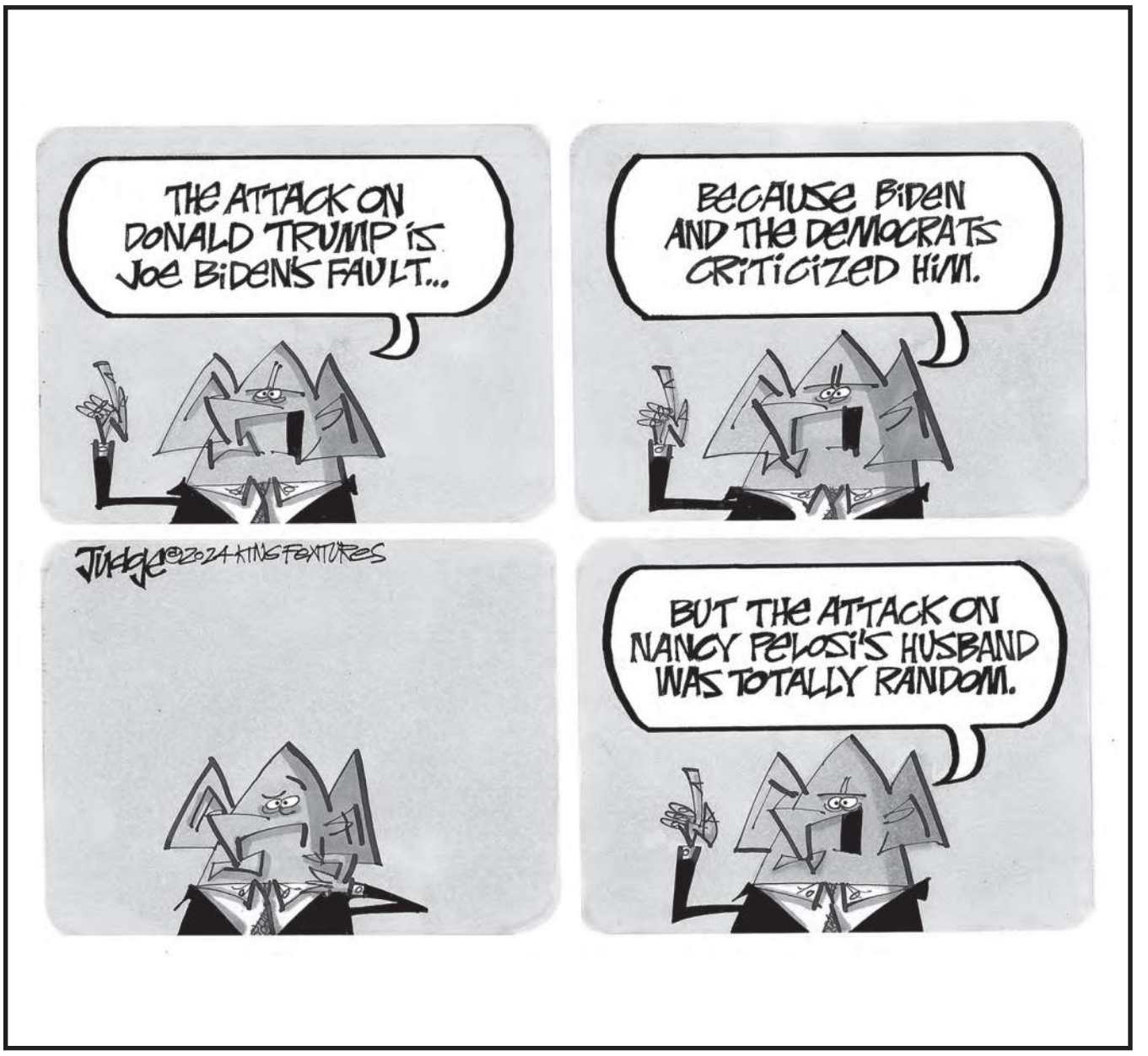
This surviving SAVE effort, which a federal judge had already whittled down, wasn't even wholesale forgiveness, but a measure to lower monthly payments and allow certain borrowers who'd had a debt load of $12,000 or less forgive their remaining loans after a decade of making regular payments. Many of these borrowers are people who went to affordable schools, as they had been encouraged to do, or didn't even finish their degrees altogether, saddling them with debt without any of the benefits.

Stopping the program in its tracks is not a decision with merely hypothetical consequences. Some 8 million people had already enrolled in the program, with more than 4 million already having a monthly payment of zero. These are real people whose financial situation will get measurably worse now that the program's been struck down.

Moreover, enrollees have likely already factored the impact of the program into future financial decisions. Debt and student debt in particular is often cited as a reason that people delay getting married, starting families, buying houses and launching businesses. Student debt at its current level is bad for the economy and bad for our society.

That doesn't mean that the government must wipe the slate clean entirely. It doesn't necessarily make much sense to zero out the balance of a high-earning law school graduate, who made the calculus to take on a significant amount of debt in exchange for the promise of a big payout, though it must be acknowledged that this debt tends to dissuade students from more public-minded professional aspirations. That's why SAVE and other proposals are tailored to

See HEAVY on Page 7


THE ATTACK ON DONALD TRUMP IS JOE BIDEN'S FAULT...
BECAUSE BIDEN AND THE DEMOCRATS CRITICIZED HIM.
JIMMY JOHNSON ©2024 KING FEATURES
BUT THE ATTACK ON NANCY PELOSI'S HUSBAND WAS TOTALLY RANDOM.

How Trump and Vance betray America's workers

By CHRISTOPHER D. COOK
Progressive Perspectives

It was a scene to behold: a union president delivering a booming, barn-burner speech at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee—"the first Teamster in our 121-year history" to address the Republican Party, Teamsters President Sean O'Brien told the cheering crowd.

While the union hasn't endorsed former President Donald Trump (yet), O'Brien's appearance—and Trump's pick of Ohio Senator and "Hillbilly Elegy" author J.D. Vance as his running mate—aimed to solidify the bizarre notion that the Republican ticket is pro-labor and "economic populist."

O'Brien's speech was rousing and provocative, a stinging rebuke of corporate power and economic elitism, as the union leader railed against "an American worker being taken for granted. Workers being sold out to big banks, Big Tech corporates and the elite." It was a fiery populist speech you'd expect at a union convention, not promoting a Republican Party whose policies enable these conditions and oppose pro-worker solutions.

The convention didn't cheer quite as loudly when O'Brien urged "legal protections that make it safer for workers to get a contract … Americans vote for unions but can never get a union contract." As he rightly noted, "It's only when Americans band together in democratic unions that we win real improvements on wages, benefits and working conditions."

One big problem: Trump, Vance and the Republican Party have opposed every effort to support workers and unions. The facts show they have no record of supporting policies to improve workers' lives.

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler immediately countered the idea that Vance is pro-labor: "Working people know talk is cheap. J.D. Vance opposed the PRO Act (Protecting the Right to Organize), has a bill to let bosses bypass their workers with phony company unions and voted against pro-worker NLRB and DOL appointments. No matter what he says, he's refused to show up for working people where it counts."

An AFL-CIO statement added that Vance "likes to play union supporter on the picket line, but his record proves that to be a sham," noting that the senator "disparaged striking UAW members while collecting hefty donations from one of the major auto companies."

Vance also cosponsored the Teamwork for Employees and Managers Act, along with Senator Marco Rubio, R-Fl., which would effectively undermine labor unions by allowing voluntary "employee involvement organizations," which would not be covered by collective-bargaining agreements and could be dissolved by an employer.

Trump, despite all his allegedly populist rhetoric, has a deeply anti-worker record from his first term.

In outlining "50 reasons the Trump administration is bad for workers," the Economic Policy Institute wrote in 2020 that President Trump "systematically promoted the interests of corporate executives and shareholders over those of working people and failed to protect workers' safety, wages and rights."

The previous Trump administration failed to protect essential workers during the deadliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic; pushed to cut wages for migrant farmworkers, who already toil for poverty wages; undermined workers' right to organize into unions; and betrayed all his promises to Rust Belt manufacturing workers by promoting the offshoring of manufacturing jobs through policies that "resulted in continued offshoring, including the net loss of nearly 1,800 factories between 2016 and 2018 and 740,000 manufacturing jobs since February 2020."

Terri Gerstein, Director of the NYU Wagner Labor Initiative, may have said it best: "Pro-worker is raising the minimum wage, ensuring people get overtime, supporting paid sick and family leave. Play-acting as working class by dressing up in jeans and acting aggrieved doesn't do anything for real working people who are struggling."

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

At the Olympics, must it be men versus women?

By IAN HURD and SADIE BARLOW
Chicago Tribune

Ian Hurd is a professor of international politics at Northwestern University. He is the author of "International Organizations." Sadie Barlow is an undergraduate student at Northwestern studying economics and international studies. She is working with Hurd this summer as a research fellow at the Buffett Institute for Global Affairs.

It may come as no surprise that the first modern Olympics were a men-only affair. The second, in Paris in 1900, included 22 women, and from then on, every Olympic Games has wrestled with whether, and how, to treat men and women differently. The concepts of equality and fairness are murky at the point where sports meets gender, and Olympic history is full of stories that show how hard it can be to muddle through.

Sex segregation is as much a part of the Olympic movement as medals, anthems and bribery scandals. There is no Olympic sport that is indifferent to gender in the sense of allowing everyone to join without regard to sex. As a result, every Olympic sport tries to regulate the boundary between men and women—and keeping up the distinction is a tremendous amount of work.

As soon as a sport differentiates athletes on the basis of sex, it needs a method to distinguish who goes in which category. And for every method, there will be ambiguities and miscategorizations, as well as contestation, inequality and injustice in the outcome. These are inescapable. One measure of an organization is how well it handles the complications that its own methods generate.

Since 1966, women's participation has been subject to various tests of sex verification. The means have changed over time and have included visual physical exams (which was exactly as crude as it sounds), chromosome and genetic testing, and hormone testing. Today, many sports are adopting a blood standard—for instance, a maximum of 5 nanomoles of testosterone per liter of blood—as the measure of a woman. Testing methods have changed over time due to concerns about intersex individuals and those with hormone- or chromosome-related health conditions.

Historically, men have not had to submit to gender testing. The purpose of testing has always been to police against men sneaking into women's competition.

Gender testing is controlled separately for each sport. Every Olympic sport has an international federation responsible for setting its rules, including the rules around male and female categories. This decentralized system means that rugby players and swimmers might face different standards for gender.

In addition, the national Olympic committee of each country could have different rules for its teams. The tangle of jurisdictions virtually guarantees that, for instance, a South African distance runner will be treated differently than a Canadian trying for the soccer team, even if they have identical bodily characteristics. The Olympic ecosystem consists of hundreds of independent organizations across different sports and nations. The International Olympic Committee seems content to delegate the dilemmas of sex segregation to them.

The categories are being shaken anew today by the visibility of transgender athletes. Trans participation has put new pressure on old categories. It has always been true that the male-female binary was only a rough approximation of biological reality, but the complexity is multiplied with more gender categories and by circumstances of individuals moving across categories over their lives. Many Olympic sports today seek to avoid dealing with the issue by trusting the gender listed on a person's birth certificate or passport. While this resolves the problem of unreliable tests, it outsources the hard part to the government that issued that document.

All this effort is intended to deter the problem of "sex fraud" in competition. The most famous case in the Olympics was a high jumper in 1936 who, today, would probably be classed as intersex. Dora Ratjen was raised as a girl, participated as a female competitor at the Berlin Games, and set records around Europe before being accused of being a man by competitors, police and a peculiarly nosy train conductor. Ratjen was acquitted of fraud and then lived as a man named Heinrich (and later Heinz).

What test would have revealed the gender truth about Nora/Heinrich/Heinz? It seems likely that the various tests used in the Olympics over the years might return a range of contradictory answers in this case. For most people, the diverse indicators of gender line up neatly and align also with how people feel about themselves. But in some cases, they don't, and in those moments, the gap between reality and bureaucratic classification becomes contentious.

One way forward is to insist that the categories represent truth. This leads to gender binary fundamentalism, which often comes at the cost of human reality and individual dignity. The other route involves accepting that people don't always fit the categories. This means giving up the illusion of scientific categories, which frees us from some artificial constraints but also makes it difficult to answer practical questions, such as who should be on the women's pole vault team.

To point this out is not to criticize. It is instead to shine a light on how the Olympics navigate the fact that gender is biologically complicated with its immense and largely unaccountable decision-making power. Gender rules at the Olympics force female athletes to conform to an outsider's theory of what constitutes a woman and also to accept the unchecked authority of global sports organizations.

To be sure, the problem is not exclusive to the Olympics—indeed, it may not be a "problem" at all. Many public policy decisions treat men and women differently. The problem is more conceptual, and more social, than just the Olympics: Every protocol to differentiate male from female will result in ambiguous cases, controversy and some instances of injustice. Rather than search for the perfect scientific measure of gender, what matters more is whether the organization can acknowledge ambiguity, admit to its role in creating occasional injustice and deal with the controversial cases with a measure of sensitivity and empathy for the people it harms.

The private power of the Olympic organizations is both enormous and unaccountable, which is a dangerous combination.

It's time to buck the rodeo

By JENNIFER O'CONNOR
Tribune News Service

Jennifer O'Connor is a senior writer with the PETA Foundation, 501 Front St., Norfolk, VA 23510; www.PETA.org.

There's a certain nostalgia for the Wild West, but horses and cows do not deserve to pay with their lives just to satisfy some humans' desire to play "cowboy." Rodeos are nothing but a show of force and domination that belongs firmly in history books.

This month at the Calgary Stampede in Alberta, Canada, three horses were euthanized after sustaining catastrophic injuries in chuckwagon races (in which teams of horses are forced to pull covered wagons around a track at literally breakneck speeds), as was a steer after his neck was twisted backward and he crashed to the ground during a rodeo.

These races have cost more than 70 horses their lives in the Calgary Stampede alone—one or more nearly every year. The track is referred to as the "half-mile of hell" for good reason. Yet a spokesperson for the Stampede still brazenly insists, "There are some things that we can't anticipate."

Animals forced to participate in rodeos are hit, kicked, spurred, slammed to the ground and goaded into violent displays. In bucking and bull-riding events, a flank strap is bound tightly around the midsections of horses and bulls, causing them to buck wildly in an effort to rid themselves of the constricting band. They routinely sustain broken necks, backs and legs.

Last month, two horses died due to injuries sustained during the bronc-riding event in a Wyoming rodeo. One was killed instantly, and the other was euthanized later. At a California rodeo in April, a calf sustained a fracture in the tie-down event and three steers sustained leg fractures in team roping events. The list goes on and on.

On the opening night of the San Diego Rodeo earlier this year, a panicked horse took off, crashed head-first into a metal safety barricade and collapsed. Event organizers quickly shielded the crowd from the ugly scene with a tarp as the downed horse was trucked off the field. "I was there and saw it ... it was horrific," wrote one witness.

Participants rarely face any consequences, even when animals are fatally injured, since rodeos generally "police" themselves. Animals used in these events are specifically excluded from the meager protections of the federal Animal Welfare Act, and many states exempt rodeos from their anti-cruelty laws because they don't apply to "normal agricultural practices" and/or "livestock." Pain-inflicting devices used in rodeos, including electric prods ("hotshots") and spurs, aren't prohibited outright.

It's clear that rodeos consider the living, feeling individuals they exploit to be cheap, expendable and replaceable. When they become too worn-out or broken-down to continue on the hellish circuit of events, they're typically sent on a one-way trip to the slaughterhouse.

Even some rodeo insiders are starting to acknowledge the cruelty of these events, particularly calf roping — commonly seen across the U.S. and Canada—in which terrified young calves charge desperately out of a chute and often sustain neck and back injuries as they're lassoed and yanked to the ground.

When asked about the controversy surrounding calf roping, one rodeo competitor told the The Indianapolis Star, "Well even I can't defend that one."

Compassionate people would never support any event that causes animals pain and suffering. Please steer clear of all rodeos.

HEAVY

From page 6

the circumstances of individual borrowers.

We hope that the public service forgiveness program that Biden announced on the same day as his court defeat will be allowed to move forward as planned. Workers like nurses, teachers and others who make us all better off should get the chance to move forward with their lives without being punished for devoting themselves to public-spirited lives.

In any case, this type of forgiveness has been authorized for more than 15 years; the only thing Biden is doing is making it actually work instead of leaving eligible borrowers in the lurch. With this judiciary, though, you never know.

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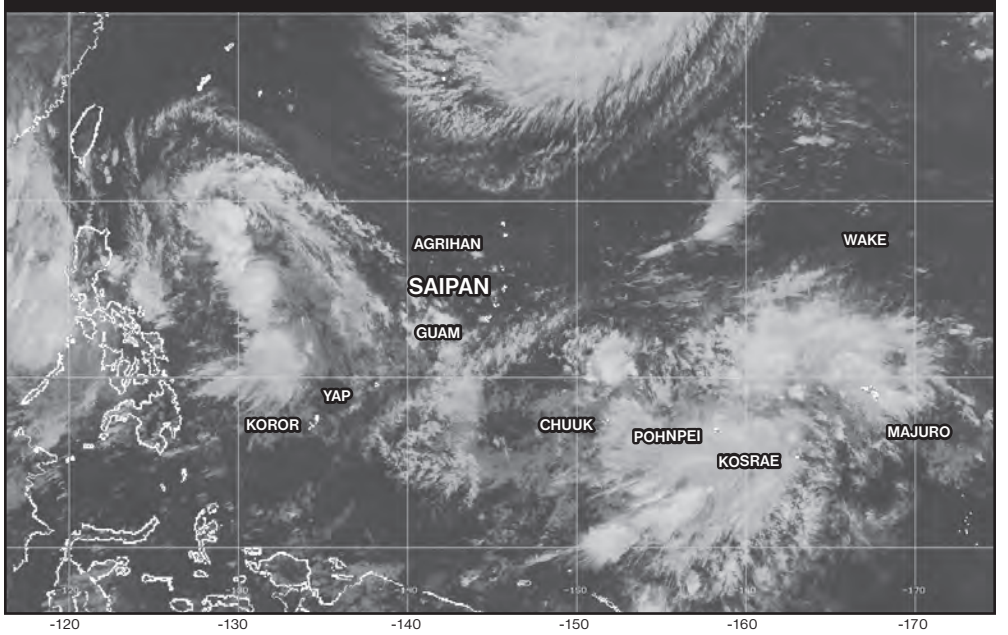
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Isolated showers. Partly sunny.	Isolated showers. Partly sunny.	Isolated showers. Partly sunny.	A chance of showers. Partly sunny.	A chance of showers. Partly sunny.
88° 79°	88° 78°	88° 78°	88° 78°	88° 78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 3:44 AM SUNDAY, JULY 28, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms near Guam overnight, with isolated showers over the CNMI. Expecting isolated showers today, but showers look to become scattered with isolated thunderstorms tonight as a surface trough pushes through the region. Otherwise, current forecast looks to be on track. However, may need to increase shower and thunderstorm potential for Monday as island-effect convection could fire off due to light winds and ample low-level moisture.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	89° / 79°
Palau	Cloudy	85° / 78°
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	87° / 80°
Chuuk	Cloudy	85° / 79°
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	85° / 76°
Kosrae	Cloudy	85° / 76°
Majuro	Cloudy	85° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:58 AM	6:48 PM
Tuesday	5:58 AM	6:47 PM
Wednesday	5:59 AM	6:47 PM
Thursday	5:59 AM	6:47 PM
Friday	5:59 AM	6:46 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	12:05 AM	1:15 PM	-
Tuesday	12:52 AM	2:16 PM	-
Wednesday	1:43 AM	3:16 PM	-
Thursday	2:38 AM	4:16 PM	-
Friday	3:35 AM	5:11 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Fair	63° / 48°
Beijing	Fair	94° / 78°
Hong Kong	Light Rain	82° / 77°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	88° / 76°
London	Mostly Cloudy	84° / 64°
Los Angeles	Sunny	91° / 73°
Manila	Thunderstorm	84° / 77°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	57° / 45°
Miami	Thunderstorm	89° / 80°
New York	Clear	84° / 70°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	100° / 82°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	88° / 68°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	87° / 77°
Rome	Sunny	93° / 70°
Salem	Thunderstorm	86° / 70°
San Francisco	Sunny	65° / 57°
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	90° / 80°
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	97° / 81°
Washington, DC	Clear	88° / 68°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
1:11 AM	Low Tide	2.13
8:42 AM	High Tide	0.29
3:39 PM	Low Tide	1.68
8:16 PM	High Tide	1.32

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 1, 2024

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	11:50AM	2:25PM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	6:50PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:10PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily
7C3471	5:50PM	9:30PM	Daily from July 17

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX77	4:05AM	7:00AM	1, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	5:30PM	9:55PM	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:20AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:25PM	6:15AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
UA184	11:50PM	5:45AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA192/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:25PM	8:50AM +1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:50AM +1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
7C3472	11:05AM	4:40PM	Daily
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
7C3404	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

HX76	7:25PM	2:35AM+1	4, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Apply now: Funding opportunity available for digital equity programs

The CNMI Broadband Policy & Development Office announced the launch of the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program, an important program by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. This program aims to bridge the digital divide and promote digital inclusion throughout the United States and its territories, including the Northern Mariana Islands. BPD encourages all eligible organizations to apply for funding to enhance digital equity in our community.

What is the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program?

The Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program focuses on promoting large-scale social and economic change by centering on digital equity, digital inclusion, and digital literacy among covered populations. This program supports projects that ensure everyone in our community has the tools and skills to fully participate in the digital economy, enhancing access to information, opportunities, and services.

How can we use the funds?

Organizations in the Northern Mariana Islands can use these funds for:

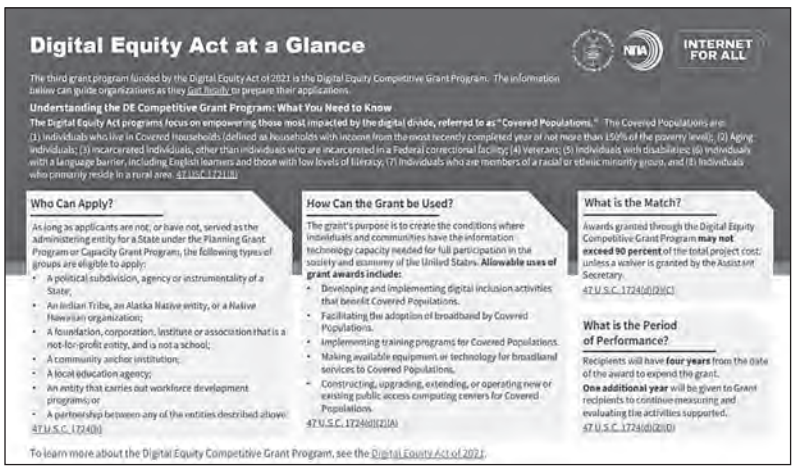
■ Teaching digital skills: Programs to help people learn how to use computers and the internet.

■ Improving internet access: Projects to bring better internet to areas that currently have poor or no service.

■ Providing devices: Giving or lending computers, tablets, and other devices to people who need them.

■ Training and support: Offering training on digital skills, online safety, and preventing online harassment.

■ Building computer centers: Setting up or improving community centers where people can access computers and the internet.


Digital Equity Act at a Glance
INTERNET FOR ALL
The third grant program funded by the Digital Equity Act of 2021 is the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program. The information below can guide organizations as they get ready to prepare their applications.
Understanding the DE Competitive Grant Program: What You Need to Know
The Digital Equity Act programs focus on empowering those most impacted by the digital divide, referred to as "Covered Populations." The Covered Populations are: (1) individuals who live in Covered Households (defined as households with income from the most recently completed year of not more than 150% of the poverty level); (2) Aging individuals; (3) incarcerated individuals, other than individuals who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility; (4) veterans; (5) individuals with disabilities; (6) individuals with a language barrier, including English learners and those with low levels of literacy; (7) individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group; and (8) individuals who primarily reside in a rural area. 47 USC 1721(b)
Who Can Apply?
As long as applicants are not, or have not, served as the administering entity for a State under the Planning Grant Program or Capacity Grant Program, the following types of groups are eligible to apply:
A political subdivision, agency or instrumentality of a State;
An Indian Tribe, an Alaska Native entity, or a Native Hawaiian organization;
A foundation, corporation, institute or association that is a not-for-profit entity, and is not a school;
A community anchor institution;
A local education agency;
An entity that carries out workforce development programs; or
A partnership between any of the entities described above.
47 U.S.C. 1724(b)
How Can the Grant be Used?
The grant's purpose is to create the conditions where individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in the society and economy of the United States. Allowable uses of grant awards include:
Developing and implementing digital inclusion activities that benefit Covered Populations.
Facilitating the adoption of broadband by Covered Populations.
Implementing training programs for Covered Populations.
Making available equipment or technology for broadband services to Covered Populations.
Constructing, upgrading, extending, or operating new or existing public access computing centers for Covered Populations.
47 U.S.C. 1724(d)(2)(A)
What is the Match?
Awards granted through the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program may not exceed 90 percent of the total project cost, unless a waiver is granted by the Assistant Secretary.
47 U.S.C. 1724(d)(2)(C)
What is the Period of Performance?
Recipients will have four years from the date of the award to expend the grant.
One additional year will be given to Grant recipients to continue measuring and evaluating the activities supported.
47 U.S.C. 1724(d)(2)(D)
To learn more about the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program, see the Digital Equity Act of 2021.

How to apply?

Interested organizations are encouraged to apply for the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program. Applications can be submitted through the NTIA's online portal. Here are the key steps:

■ Learn about the program: Detailed information about eligibility, funding priorities, and application requirements can be found on the NTIA website.

■ Prepare your application: Gather all necessary documents and information, including a detailed project proposal, budget outline, and organizational details.

■ Submit your application: Complete and submit your application through the NTIA's online portal, https://grants.ntia.gov, by the deadline.

When is the deadline?

All applications must be submitted by Oct. 22, 2024. It is important to submit your application on time to take advantage of this opportunity.

Need help?

If you need help with the application process or have any questions about the program, contact the CNMI Broadband Policy & Development at cnmi.bpd@gmail.com. Visit the BPD online at bpd.cnmi.gov for updates and further details. ***(PR)***

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net
Tels: (670) 234-9447 / 234-6866 / 234-7670 • Fax: (670) 234-9021

PUBLIC NOTICE

JULY 22, 2024

This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD funds.

COMBINED NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS

Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation
Saipan, MP 96950 Tel: (670) 234-9447/6866

This notice shall satisfy the above-cited two separate but related procedural notification requirements.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or after **August 07, 2024,** the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Honolulu Field Office, for the release of Community Project Funding Grant (CPF) pursuant to the authority of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (Public Law 117-103); and the Explanatory Statement of Division of that Act, which was printed in the House Section of the Congressional Record on March 09, 2022 (Explanatory Statement); and superseding provisions of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Public Law 117-328).

Project/Activity Type	Purpose	Location	Total Project Cost
New Construction: Generator house and ongoing maintenance of a generator.	To provide ongoing services to victims of domestic violence and human trafficking during weather events and long-term power outages in Saipan.	**Recipient Location:** Dandan, Saipan **Original Location for the project:** Confidential	$50,000.00

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the above-listed projects will not significantly impact the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Central Office in Garapan, Saipan. It may be examined or copied during regular work hours, Monday through Friday except CNMI or Austerity Holidays, from 7:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group, or agency disagreeing with this determination or wishing to comment on the projects may submit written comments to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950, or direct delivery to the central office in Garapan, Saipan. All comments received by **August 07, 2024, 4:30 p.m.,** will be considered by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands before authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Commenters should specify which part of this Notice they are addressing.

RELEASE OF FUNDS

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands certifies to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD Honolulu Field Office that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Governor Arnold I. Palacios consent to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process, and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office acceptance of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and related laws and authorities, and allows the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands to use Program Funds.

OBJECTION TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office will accept objections to its release of funds and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands certification for a period of **fifteen days** following anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if it is on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands; (b) the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) the grant recipient has incurred cost not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of the release of funds by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures of 24 CFR Part 58 and shall be addressed to the **U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development, Honolulu Field Office, 1003 Bishop Street, Suite 2100, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813** and CPDHonolulu@hud.gov. Potential objectors should contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

/s/
Arnold I. Palacios
Governor, CNMI

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net
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PUBLIC NOTICE

July 22, 2024

This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD funds.

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Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation
Saipan, MP 96950 Tel: (670) 234-9447/6866

This notice shall satisfy the above-cited two separate but related procedural notification requirements.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or after **August 07, 2024,** the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Honolulu Field Office, for the release of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (PL 93-383), as amended, to undertake the following projects and purposes in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands:

Project/Activity Type	Purpose	Location	Total Project Cost
New Construction: Childcare Facility (Rota)	Construct a concrete Early Childhood Learning Facility to provide quality care services that will support the overall development of young children in Rota.	Lot No. 345 R 524, Sinapalo III, Rota	$450,000.00

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the above-listed projects will not significantly impact the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Central Office in Garapan, Saipan. It may be examined or copied during regular work hours, Monday through Friday except CNMI or Austerity Holidays, from 7:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group, or agency disagreeing with this determination or wishing to comment on the projects may submit written comments to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950, or direct delivery to the central office in Garapan, Saipan. All comments received by **August 07, 2024, 4:30 p.m.,** will be considered by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands before authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Commenters should specify which part of this Notice they are addressing.

RELEASE OF FUNDS

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/s/
Arnold I. Palacios
Governor, CNMI

Business

Chamber monthly meeting set on Aug. 7

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce's August general membership meeting has been scheduled for Aug. 7 2024, from 11:30am to 1pm at Charley's Room, Pacific Islands Club Saipan.

This meeting will feature updates from the Chamber's committee chairs who will present updates on recent activities, plans, and initiatives.

The Chamber's board of directors will also share updates from its recent trip for the Mariana Islands Legislature Association, 2nd General Assembly, some concepts include: Open Skies concept, Marianas Worker Visas, and the Marianas Regional Commission.

The Chamber will also conduct its annual scholarship awarding ceremony to selected young individuals to assist them in pursuing higher education with the Northern Marianas College and/or the Northern Marianas Technical Institute. The Chamber would like to give a huge shout out to its Chamber membership. "Without your contributions and support, this program would not be made available to our youth, Thank you members!"

The general membership meeting rates are as follows: Chamber member rate is $35 and future Chamber member rate is $40.

For more information or to secure your seat, reach out to the Chamber by phone at (670) 234-7150 or email contactus@saipan-chamber.org

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit organization whose mission is to empower our enterprises as a resource, advocate, and connector for Saipan's private sector. Its vision is to create an island where businesses, families, and communities succeed as one. For more information or to learn how to become a Chamber member, visit online at www.saipan-chamber.com, call (670) 234-7150, or visit the 2nd Floor of the Marianas Business Plaza (Suite 201-A). ***(PR)***

Justice Dept says TikTok collected US user views on issues like abortion, gun control

WASHINGTON (AP)—In a fresh broadside against one of the world's most popular technology companies, the Justice Department is accusing TikTok of harnessing the capability to gather bulk information on users based on views on divisive social issues like gun control, abortion and religion.

Government lawyers wrote in documents filed late Friday to the federal appeals court in Washington that TikTok and its Beijing-based parent company ByteDance used an internal web-suite system called Lark to enable TikTok employees to speak directly with ByteDance engineers in China.

TikTok employees used Lark to send sensitive data about U.S. users, information that has wound up being stored on Chinese servers and accessible to ByteDance employees in China, federal officials said.

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Nation

'Gen Z feels the Kamalove'

CHICAGO (AP)—"Brats for Harris." "We need a Kamalanomenon." "Gen Z feels the Kamalove."

In the days since President Joe Biden exited the presidential race and endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris, Gen Z voters jumped to social media to share coconut tree and "brat summer" memes—reflecting a stark shift in tone for a generation that's voiced feeling left behind by the Democratic Party.

Youth-led progressive organizations have warned for months that Biden had a problem with young voters, pleading with the president to work more closely with them to refocus on the issues most important to younger generations or risk losing their votes. With Biden out of the race, many of these young leaders are now hoping Harris can overcome his faltering support among Gen Z and harness a new explosion of energy among young voters.

» Youth-led progressive groups hope Harris will energize young voters

Since last Sunday, statements have poured out from youth-led organizations across the country, including in Arizona, Wisconsin, Michigan, California, Minnesota, North Carolina and Pennsylvania, as leaders thanked Biden for stepping aside and celebrated the opportunity to organize around a new candidate. On Friday, a coalition of 17 youth-led groups endorsed Harris.

"This changes everything," said Zo Tobi, director of communication for the Movement Voter Project, a national progressive funding group focusing on youth-led organizations, when he heard the news that Biden was dropping out of the race and endorsing Harris. "The world as it is suddenly shifted into the world as it could be."

As the campaign enters a new phase, both Harris and her Republican rival, Donald Trump, are delivering messages aimed at younger voters who could prove decisive in some of the most hotly contested states.

Harris, in a pre-recorded virtual address Saturday to the Voters of Tomorrow conference in the battleground state of Georgia, said "because young voters showed up" in 2020 she became the first female vice president in U.S. history. She trumpeted her work in the Biden administration's efforts on addressing gun violence and climate change.

"We need your support," Harris told the left-leaning group that promotes engagement among Generation Z voters. "In this election, we know young voters will be key, and we know your vote cannot be taken for granted. It must be earned."

Firefighters get some help from cooler temps after California's largest wildfire explodes

FOREST RANCH, Calif. (AP)—Thousands of firefighters battling a wildfire in northern California received some help from the weather Saturday, just hours after the blaze exploded in size, scorching an area greater than the size of Los Angeles. The blaze was one of several tearing through the western United States and Canada, fueled by wind and heat.

Cooler temperatures and an increase in humidity on Saturday could help slow the Park Fire, the largest blaze so far this year in California. The blaze's intensity and dramatic spread led fire officials to make unwelcome comparisons to the monstrous Camp Fire. That fire burned out of control in nearby Paradise in 2018, killing 85 people and torching 11,000 homes.

And Paradise again was near the danger zone. The entire town was under an evacuation warning Saturday, one of several communities in Butte County. Evacuation orders were also issued in Plumas, Tehama and Shasta counties. An evacuation warning calls for people to prepare to evacuate and await instructions. An evacuation order means to leave immediately.

Temperatures are expected to be cooler than average through the middle of next week, but "that doesn't mean that fires that are existing will go away," said Marc Chenard, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center in College Park, Maryland.

The blaze has scorched 540 square miles (1,409 square kilometers) as of Saturday with no containment. Los Angeles covers roughly 503 square miles (1,320 square kilometers). The blaze was moving north and east after igniting Wednesday, when authorities said a man pushed a burning car into a gully in Chico and then calmly blended in with others fleeing the scene.

Ronnie Dean Stout, 42, of Chico, was arrested early Thursday in connection with the blaze and held without bail pending a Monday arraignment, officials said. There was no reply to an email to the district attorney asking whether the suspect had legal representation or someone who could comment on his behalf.

Cal Fire incident commander Billy See said at a briefing on Saturday that the blaze had been advancing 8 square miles (21 square kilometers) per hour since its inception. But there was cautious optimism as weather conditions slowed the fire's advance in some areas, and firefighters were able to plan and deploy additional personnel. Nearly 2,500 firefighters were battling the blaze, aided by 16 helicopters and numerous air tankers.

Life & Style

Celine Dion makes musical comeback at Paris Olympics

PARIS (AP)—Celine Dion made a triumphant return Friday with a very public performance: closing out the Paris Olympics' opening ceremony from the Eiffel Tower.

Nearly two years after revealing her stiff person syndrome diagnosis, Dion belted Edith Piaf's "Hymne à l'amour" ("Hymn to Love") as the finale of the roughly four-hour spectacle. Her appearance had been teased for weeks, but organizers and Dion's representatives had refused to confirm whether she was performing.

On a page dedicated to Dior's contributions to the opening ceremony, the media guide referred to "a world star, for a purely grandiose, superbly scintillating finale."

Dion had been absent from the stage since 2020, when the coronavirus pandemic forced the postponement of her tour to 2022. That tour was eventually suspended in the wake of her diagnosis.

The rare neurological disorder causes rigid muscles and painful muscle spasms, which were affecting Dion's ability to walk and sing. In June, at the premiere of the documentary "I Am: Celine Dion," she told The Associated Press that returning required therapy, "physically, mentally, emotionally, vocally."

"So that's why it takes a while. But absolutely why we're doing this because I'm already a little bit back," she said then.

Even before the documentary's release, Dion had taken steps toward a comeback. In February, she made another surprise appearance, at the Grammy Awards, where she presented the final award of the night to a standing ovation.

For Friday's performance, Dion's pearl outfit was indeed designed by Dior. Speaking on French television, the Paris organizing committee's director of design and costume for ceremonies, Daphné Bürki, recalled Dion's enthusiasm for the opportunity.

AP

This photo released by the Olympic Broadcasting Services shows Canadian Singer Celine Dion performing at the Eiffel Tower during the opening ceremony for the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France, Friday, July 26, 2024.

"When we called Celine Dion one year ago she said yes straight away," Bürki said.

Dion is not actually French—the French Canadian is from Quebec—but she has a strong connection to the country and the Olympics. Dion's first language is French, and she has dominated the charts in France and other French-speaking countries. (She also won the 1988 Eurovision Song Contest with a French-language song ... representing Switzerland.) And early in her English-language career—even before "My Heart Will Go On" from "Titanic"—she was tapped to perform "The Power of The Dream," the theme song for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

Dion's song choice also evoked a sports connection: Piaf wrote it about her lover, boxer Marcel Cerdan. Cerdan died soon after she wrote the song, in a plane crash.

Marvel returns to Comic-Con with hotly anticipated panel about its post-'Deadpool & Wolverine' plans

SAN DIEGO (AP)— Marvel Studios is returning to San Diego Comic-Con for its iconic Saturday night panel, which is expected to feature big announcements and surprise guests.

After Marvel skipped the convention last year due to the Hollywood strikes, which prevented writers and actors from speaking on panels, anticipation for its session in Comic-Con's famed Hall H is palpable among fans.

The studio is expected to announce news teasing their upcoming titles in its "Phase 5" plan and beyond, with Marvel President Kevin Feige as the only confirmed speaker. He will be joined by several special guests, who may include stars of upcoming Marvel titles like "Captain America: Brave New World," "Thunderbolts(asterisk)" and "The Fantastic Four."

Fans are speculating that Marvel will confirm cast members and show clips or trailers for upcoming films and Disney+ series.

Marvel already took over Hall H on Thursday with an electric panel celebrating "Deadpool & Wolverine," in which the audience was treated to a full screening and surprise guests joining stars Ryan Reynolds and Hugh Jackman on stage.

The mounting enthusiasm for the film at Comic-Con was reflected across the country as the fans rushed to see it in theaters, securing the film as the new record holder for the Thursday preview for an R-rated movie. The comic book film sold an estimated $38.5 million worth of movie tickets from preview screenings Thursday.

The "Deadpool & Wolverine" success woke up a sleepy year for Marvel and assuaged worries about its box-office underperformance in late 2023. The superhero factory hit a record low in November with the launch of "The Marvels," which opened with just $47 million.

Prior to the studio's latest opening, which is on track to break more records, the idea of "superhero fatigue" became a popular talking point in the film world.

"Deadpool & Wolverine" and Thursday's packed panel have dampened discussion of audience apathy for comic book movies.

Warner Bros. Discovery sues NBA for not accepting its matching offer

Warner Bros. Discovery has sued the NBA after the league did not accept the company's matching offer for one of the packages in its upcoming 11-year media rights deal.

The lawsuit was filed on Friday in New York state court in Manhattan.

WBD, the parent company of TNT Sports, is seeking a judgement that it matched Amazon Prime Video's offer and an order seeking to delay the new media rights deal from taking effect beginning with the 2025-26 season.

The NBA signed its deals with Disney, NBCUniversal and Amazon Prime Video on Wednesday after saying it was not accepting Warner Bros. Discovery's $1.8 billion per year offer. The deals will bring the league around $76 billion over 11 years.

"Given the NBA's unjustified rejection of our matching of a third-party offer, we have taken legal action to enforce our rights," TNT Sports said in a statement. "We strongly believe this is not just our contractual right, but also in the best interest of fans who want to keep watching our industry-leading NBA content with the choice and flexibility we offer them through our widely distributed WBD video-first distribution platforms—including TNT and Max."

NBA spokesman Mike Bass said in a statement that "Warner Bros. Discovery's claims are without merit and our lawyers will address them."

WBD says in the lawsuit that "TBS properly matched the Amazon Offer by agreeing to telecast the games on both TNT and Max. The Amazon Offer provides for Cable Rights, including TNT Rights, because the offer is for games that TBS currently has the right to distribute on TNT via Non-Broadcast Television, which includes both cable and Internet distribution."

WBD also claims under its contract it "has the right to 'Match a Third Party Offer that provides for the exercise of (NBA games) via any form of combined audio and video distribution.'"

The lawsuit is another chapter in a deteriorating relationship between the league and Turner Sports that has gone on nearly 40 years. ***(AP)***

Daughter's boyfriend is in no hurry to grow up

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I have a daughter, "Liz," who is our life. She's 28 and a nurse. Her boyfriend, "Owen," used to be a heavy cannabis user. My wife suspects he still uses it when he gets "stressed." He is also a gambler.

We have tried to give Owen a chance. He had no place to stay, so he stays in our walk-in in-law apartment. My wife thinks he is disrespectful, but I think she overreacts because she doesn't like him.

Owen has been going out with my daughter for four years now, and he says he is getting her a ring, but nothing transpires. Liz seems to love him, but my wife and I feel he's not a good choice and is headed for trouble down the road.

I'm at my wit's end and my wife is constantly stressed. I know you are going to say our daughter is 28 and an adult, etc., but this situation is different. What else can you offer?

STRUNG ALONG IN NEW YORK

DEAR STRUNG ALONG: Have a "man-to-man" talk with Owen to ask directly what his plans are regarding his relationship with your daughter. He has lived with you (rent-free, I presume) for four years, and the ring he promised hasn't materialized.

The living situation you have tolerated for so long hasn't helped him move forward. (Could he have gambling debts?) While Liz may not like you doing it, explain to Owen that it's time to find a place of his own. I'm hoping, as I suspect you are, that this may galvanize him to action -- whether it's to step up to the plate or head out the door.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: How do I ask my family to stop worrying about me? I was widowed three years ago after a 28-year relationship. My sisters and father panic if I don't respond to their texts within 12 hours, always telling me they are "just worried."

We live in different time zones, and I try to respect them by not responding after 9 or 10 p.m. They react with great worry when they don't hear from me. I am a capable, self-aware adult, and I would like this to stop without hurting their feelings. I have told them this and they continue!

For example, I traveled one weekend and returned home after 10 p.m. my time, midnight their time, and they responded 12 hours later "HELLO??" when I didn't respond to a text about whether I was home. This was air travel, not by car. When my father learned I had been out of town, he was hurt that he was not aware.

I appreciate their concern but do not feel I need to reassure them of my well-being. At the same time, I don't want to push them away. Please advise.

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DOING WELL IN NEVADA

DEAR DOING WELL: Clearly, you have been much too considerate. Here's what you do: Regardless of the hour, answer their texts. LET them wake up at midnight or 1 a.m. to the "good news" that you have arrived home safely, and perhaps they'll loosen up and stop worrying so much.

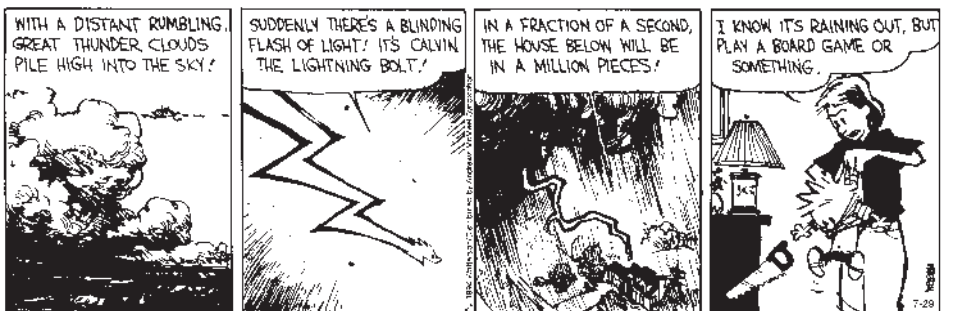
■■■

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $16 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

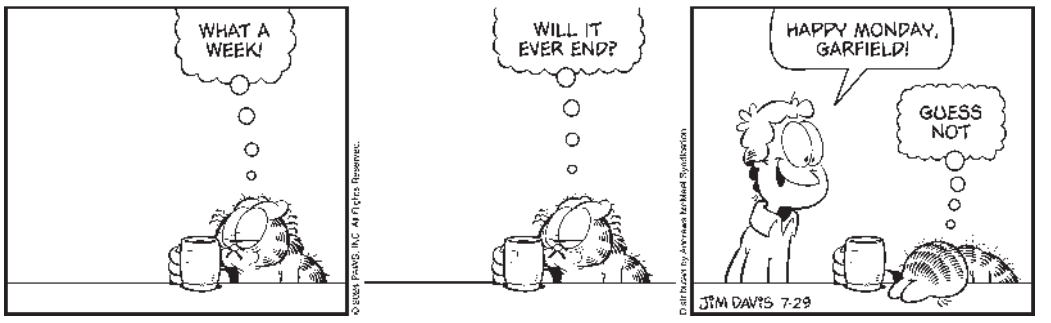
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


WITH A DISTANT RUMBLING, GREAT THUNDER CLOUDS PILE HIGH INTO THE SKY!
SUDDENLY THERE'S A BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT! IT'S CALVIN, THE LIGHTNING BOLT!
IN A FRACTION OF A SECOND, THE HOUSE BELOW WILL BE IN A MILLION PIECES!
I KNOW IT'S RAINING OUT, BUT PLAY A BOARD GAME OR SOMETHING.
7-29

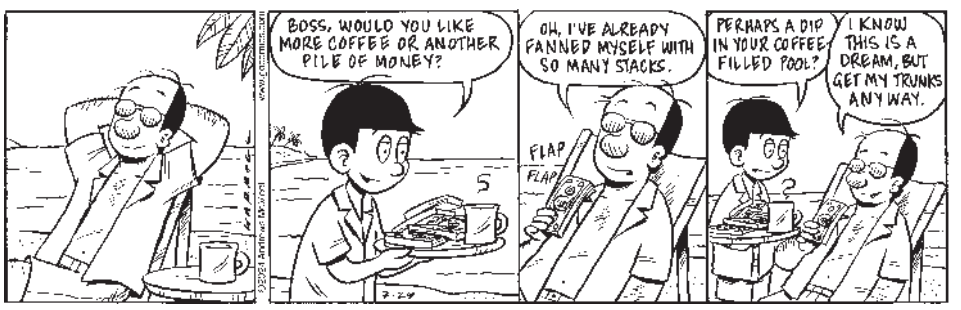
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



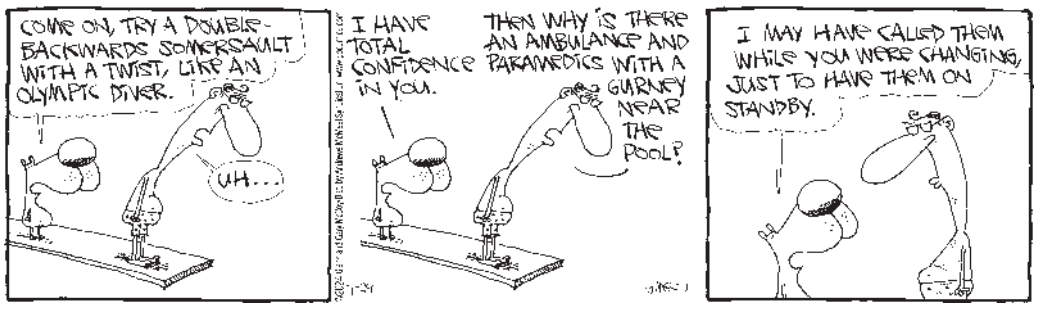
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


BOSS, WOULD YOU LIKE MORE COFFEE OR ANOTHER PILE OF MONEY?
OH, I'VE ALREADY FANNED MYSELF WITH SO MANY STACKS.
FLAP FLAP
PERHAPS A DIP IN YOUR COFFEE-FILLED POOL?
I KNOW THIS IS A DREAM, BUT GET MY TRUNKS ANYWAY.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


COME ON, TRY A DOUBLE-BACKWARDS SOMERSAULT WITH A TWIST, LIKE AN OLYMPIC DIVER.
UH...
I HAVE TOTAL CONFIDENCE IN YOU.
THEN WHY IS THERE AN AMBULANCE AND PARAMEDICS WITH A GURNEY NEAR THE POOL?
I MAY HAVE CALLED THEM WHILE YOU WERE CHANGING, JUST TO HAVE THEM ON STANDBY.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

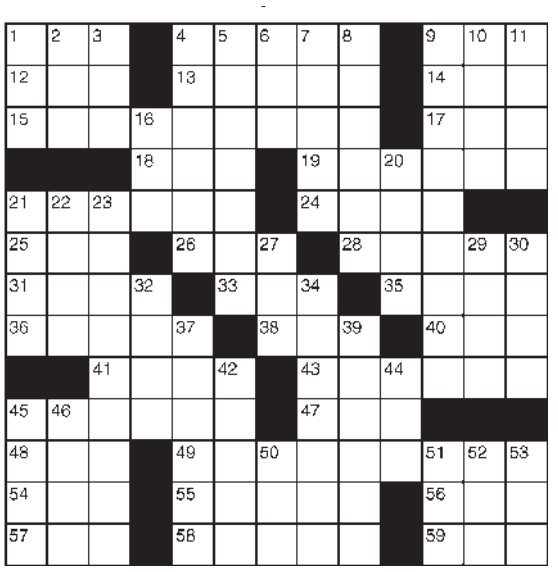
ACROSS
1 Scoundrel
4 Justice Kagan
9 UFO crew
12 Season opener?
13 Ticks off
14 HBO competitor
15 Fix up
17 — Talks (lecture series)
18 Roofing goo
19 Tennessee team
21 Old Spanish coin
24 Belgrade resident
25 Atty.'s title
26 Wall St. whiz
28 Audition goals
31 PC brains
33 Since Jan. 1
35 Scrabble piece
36 Prepare to pray
38 Victory
40 Govt. lender for a start-up
41 Smell — (suspect)
43 "Who cares?"
45 Eritrea's capital
47 In the manner of
48 Luau bowlful
49 Mumbo jumbo
54 Mag. staff
55 Some Yale newcomers
56 MGM rival
57 "Lah-di-—!"
58 Eyelid woes
59 Young fox

DOWN
1 YMCA class
2 "— you ready?"
3 Dict. info
4 Mistakes in print
5 Book-lined room
6 NFL's Manning
7 Egg holders
8 More wan
9 Set up, as rules
10 Subsequently
11 Freshens a lawn, say
16 Salt Lake athlete
20 Jog
21 Quick kiss
22 "NFL Live" channel
23 Nauseated
27 "Incidentally," to texters
29 Exile isle
30 Membership
32 Antitoxins
34 Switch off, as a firewall
37 Slow movements, in music
39 At minimum
42 Sully
44 Kids' card game
45 Mimicked
46 Scotch go-with
50 Ottoman ruler
51 Annoy
52 Enjoy Vail
53 Sizzling

Solution time: 21 mins.

O	P	E	N	S		U	I	M		S	I	C
I	I	C	M	E	N		P	C	I		A	D	O
O	P	E	R	A		H	A	V	A	R	T	I
		R	O	G	U	E	S		C	A	A	N
L	E	I		S	T	L		S	O	N	G	S
B	L	T	S		U	D	D	E	R			
S	L	I	C	E	R		R	E	N	E	G	E
			A	P	N	E	A		S	L	O	G
O	B	A	M	A		G	M	A		M	O	O
R	E	U	P		A	G	A	S	S	I		
C	H	R	I	S	T	I		H	A	S	T	O
A	A	A		Y	F	N		F	I	T	O	N
S	R	S		D	E	G		S	E	I	N	E

Last Friday's answer 7-29



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Selena Gomez, 32; Rufus Wainwright, 51; David Spade, 60; Willem Dafoe, 69.

Happy Birthday: Take more interest in what's going on in your community this year. Participation and getting to know people facing similar situations will give you a better understanding of what's available to you. Broaden your sense of the possibilities, and establish what's best for you. What you put out is what you'll get back. Being generous will attract good people, new beginnings and affectionate gestures. Your numbers are 5, 11, 19, 26, 33, 37, 41.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Seize the moment and push for what you want. Join forces with people who share your expectations and concerns. Become the voice that makes a difference. Turn what you do best into something lucrative. Don't let emotions fester when action is necessary. Stop procrastinating. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Look before you leap. Avoid acting prematurely, offering too much information or making compromising promises. Focus on your finances and how to bring money in instead of doling it out. Stick close to home and implement a cheaper lifestyle. Establish priorities and prosper. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Follow the trends. Know your market and associate with people you consider mentors. Personal growth will lead to better days ahead. Fix up your personal space and spend more time with someone you love. Become the driving force behind what you want; success will follow. ✪✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Take control and make things happen. High energy and enthusiasm will draw attention and the help you require to make a difference. Don't hesitate to let someone know your intentions and how you feel. An emotional situation will turn into a fantastic opportunity. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Press forward with vim and vigor. Take a leadership position and be responsible for making opportunities you desire. It's your time to flourish, so don't let laziness squelch your dreams. Personal improvement is favored, and romance is in the stars. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Keep life simple and doable with a purpose in mind. Your conduct will set an example for others and influence how others treat you. Learning, researching and observing will help you make better decisions and lifestyle changes. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Do your part. The people you encounter will enrich your life. Don't be afraid to try something new or to change your look or approach to life and love. Put your energy where it counts, and become a participant instead of a bystander. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Be attentive, helpful and kind, but agree only to implement a move if ready. Set reasonable goals and dedicate your time accordingly. Be cognizant of older or rigid individuals' needs to avoid opposition. Traveling and gathering and confirming information will be in your best interest. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Flit about, gather information and organize your thoughts. Preparation and awareness will aid you in discovering who is on your side and what's possible and to your advantage. Question, adjust and follow through with your plans. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Address options and execute the changes that will put your mind at ease and balance your bank account. Consider those who influence you and how you live, and begin a dialogue that encourages being less frivolous and saving for something that has long-term benefits. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Spread joy and you'll get the help you require to improve your surroundings or achieve contentment. Love and romance are apparent if you make the first move. A pick-me-up that boosts your confidence will encourage you to go after your dreams. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Finish what you start, live up to your promises and don't allow anyone to manipulate a situation or lure you into an argument. Change what's necessary and leads to a better position. Be open to suggestions but careful not to take on more than you can handle. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are brave, generous and loving. You are persistent and helpful.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

9			5		6	8		
5	7					9	6	
8	6	1	7	3	9	2		
	9	7	8		5			
3		8	9	2			5	6
		4						9
		6		7	4			
		5		9		1		7
	8	9		5	3			

Difficulty: ★ 7/29

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Friday's Answer

8	7	4	9	3	2	5	6	1
2	6	3	8	5	1	9	4	7
9	5	1	4	6	7	8	3	2
6	8	9	5	7	3	1	2	4
4	3	5	1	2	9	6	7	8
1	2	7	6	4	8	3	9	5
7	9	2	3	1	5	4	8	6
3	1	6	7	8	4	2	5	9
5	4	8	2	9	6	7	1	3

Difficulty: ★★★★ 7/26

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

WILLIE MAYS (1931-2024) Solution: 8 letters

D	I	K	Y	E	H	Y	A	S	I	G	N	I	N	G
M	H	A	L	L	O	F	F	A	M	E	O	E	A	R
O	O	L	L	A	B	E	S	A	B	N	W	M	E	E
D	W	E	E	U	H	S	O	E	I	Y	E	T	M	A
E	A	I	C	A	T	B	A	S	O	S	T	R	N	T
E	R	K	Y	E	H	M	A	R	E	I	E	I	O	E
R	D	O	M	E	A	C	K	T	H	R	E	B	I	S
F	S	O	R	B	A	A	I	A	T	U	R	U	S	T
F	T	R	A	T	V	R	R	Ⓜ	N	I	G	T	I	M
O	N	L	C	E	E	L	Ⓥ	E	E	N	N	E	V	U
L	A	H	R	H	E	Ⓟ	N	S	T	U	I	G	E	I
A	I	A	G	M	H	A	R	A	S	N	T	E	L	D
D	G	R	E	N	I	T	S	E	N	R	E	A	E	A
E	A	I	R	F	O	R	C	E	O	N	E	C	T	T
M	A	H	G	N	I	M	R	I	B	G	N	I	W	S

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Air Force One, Alabama, Annie, Army, Average, Baseball, Batting, Birmingham, Buck, Casino, Catch, Center, Ernestine, Games, Giants, Greatest, Greet, Hall of Fame, Harlem, Hitter, Howard, Mae, Margherite, Medal of Freedom, Mets, Michael, MVP, New York, Rookie, Sarah, Say Hey Kid, Signing, Stadium, Statue, Swing, Television, Tribute

Last Friday's answer : Trip

The NEW Volume 77 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Canada tops Giannis and Greece on Day 1 of hoops tilt

VILLENEUVE-D'ASCQ, France (AP)—Canada was tested, then held on to get its first Olympic win in 24 years.

RJ Barrett scored 23 points, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander added 21 and Canada survived a big effort from Giannis Antetokounmpo to beat Greece 86-79 in the Paris Olympics opener for both teams in Group A play on Saturday night.

Antetokounmpo led all scorers with 34 points for Greece. Dillon Brooks scored 14 for Canada.

Even though Antetokounmpo had the big night, Barrett lauded the waves of defenders Canada threw his way.

"That's why you have the word 'team,'" Barrett said. "It's not one guy. It's all of us, all together. Everybody has their part to do. Playing Giannis is not an easy task."

Canada led by as many as 16 and never trailed, though Greece made matters very interesting in the final moments. Vasilis Toilopoulos scored with 1:15 remaining to get Greece within four and a Canada turnover on the next possession led to a dunk by Antetokounmpo to cut the lead to 80-78.

But Gilgeous-Alexander got a high-arching shot over Antetokounmpo's outstretched arm to kiss off the glass for a score with 42.8 seconds left, restoring the four-point edge, and Canada would escape.

AP

Georgios Papagiannis, of Greece, and Dwight Powell, of Canada, fight for position in a men's basketball game at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Saturday, July 27, 2024, in Villeneuve-d'Ascq, France.

"They're a really good team so that's going to happen," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "They're not going to quit, obviously. So we expected that. We expected we'd make our run and they'd have a little more juice and make their run. For us it was just about weathering the storms, and kind of sticking to our game plan throughout the runs. Basketball is a game of ups and downs. We just try to weather the other teams' better than they weather yours."

There were 52 fouls called in the game resulting in 64 free throws — 32 for each team.

It was Canada's first Olympic men's basketball win since 2000 at Sydney. The Canadians hadn't made an Olympic tournament since — but earned this spot after a run to the bronze medal at the World Cup last summer in the Philippines.

France 78, Brazil 66

Victor Wembanyama had 19 points, nine rebounds, four steals and three blocks to help France overcome an early deficit and get past Brazil in Group B.

"We're all here for a purpose," Wembanyama said.

France coach Vincent Collet acknowledged he noticed Wembanyama consumed by something he'd never seen on the young phenom this week: anxiety.

"I think for the first time in his career he was a little bit stressed this week," Collet said. "I tried to help him. He's so mature that day-by-day he got better. ... People who know basketball understand he's only 20 years (old). People, they like sports but they do not know basketball, they think Victor is always Michael Jordan."

Almost, though?

"He's not far, but he still needs some time," Collet said with a smile.

Nicolas Batum added 19 points for France, which was showered with chants of "Les Bleus!" France next plays Japan, which lost Saturday to Germany, on Tuesday. Brazil has Germany next.

Leo Meindl and Cristiano Felicio led Brazil with 14 points apiece.

Australia 92, Spain 80

Jock Landale had 20 points and nine rebounds and Australia opened Group A play with a win.

Patty Mills scored 19 points and Josh Giddey added 17 to lift Australia, which is tied with Canada atop Group A. Australia faces Canada on Tuesday, while Spain will face Greece in a game that will be big for both teams in terms of making the knockout stage.

"They made two heavy runs at us and then took the lead. I thought we were fearless and were courageous, and I thought we had great guard play," Australia coach Brian Goorjian said. "Just a good contribution from everybody."

Santi Aldama scored 27 points for Spain and Sergio Llull added 17 points.

With 2:13 remaining in the period, Spain's Usman Garuba set a hard screen on Australia's Josh Green, sending him stumbling backward. Green took exception and got in Garuba's face. Garuba slapped Green's hand away and Will Magnay stepped in to defend his teammate, prompting Garuba to shove him.

Referees reviewed the incident and accessed double unsportsmanlike fouls on Garuba and Magnay. Two more incidents also resulted in brief game stoppages.

Germany 97, Japan 77

Franz Wagner had 22 points and six rebounds, and Germany pulled away from Japan in the second half to secure a Group B win.

Daniel Theis added 18 points and seven rebounds. Moritz Wagner scored 15 for the defending World Cup champions, who never trailed and face Brazil on Tuesday. Japan takes on Olympics host France that same day.

"We kind of got a target on our back after last year's success," Theis said. "Everybody wants to beat the world champion."

Rui Hachimura finished with 20 points for Japan, which has only 13 wins in its seven Olympic appearances.

"We know we're organized, so we have to get together," Hachimura said. "We've got to know what we're doing."

Dennis Schroder had 13 points and 12 assists for Germany, which entered the Olympics ranked third in FIBA's world rankings behind the U.S. and Spain.

Paris' Olympics opening was wacky and wonderful—and upset bishops. Here's why

PARIS (AP)—Paris: the Olympic gold medalist of naughtiness.

Revolution ran like a high-voltage wire through the wacky, wonderful and rule-breaking Olympic opening ceremony that the French capital used to astound, bemuse and, at times, poke a finger in the eye of global audiences on Friday night.

That Paris put on the most flamboyant and diversity-celebrating of opening ceremonies wasn't a surprise. Anything less would have seemed a betrayal of the pride the French capital takes in being a home to humanity in all its richness.

But still. Wow. Paris didn't just push the envelope. It did away with it entirely as it hammered home a message that freedom must know no bounds.

A practically naked singer painted blue made thinly veiled references to his body parts. Blonde-bearded drag queen Piche crawled on all fours to the thumping beat of "Freed From Desire" by singer-songwriter Gala, who has long been a potent voice against homophobia. There were the beginnings of a menage à trois—the door was slammed on the camera before things got really steamy—and the tail end of an intimate embrace between two men who danced away, hugging and holding hands.

"In France, we have the right to love each other, as we want and with who we want. In France, we have the right to believe or to not believe. In France, we have a lot of rights. Voila," said the audacious show's artistic director, Thomas Jolly.

Jolly, who is gay, says being bullied as a child for supposedly being effeminate drove home early on how unjust discrimination is.

The amorous vibe and impudence were too much for some.

"Know that it is not France that is speaking but a left-wing minority ready for any provocation," posted far-right French politician Marion Maréchal, adding a hashtagged "notinmyname."

Here's a closer look at how Paris both awed and shocked.

A 21st-century update of Leonardo da Vinci's 'Last Supper'

DJ and producer Barbara Butch, an LGBTQ+ icon who calls herself a "love activist," wore a silver headdress that looked like a halo as she got a party going on a footbridge across the Seine, above parading athletes — including those from countries that criminalize LGBTQ+ people. Drag artists, dancers and others flanked Butch on both sides.

The tableau brought to mind Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper," which depicts the moment when Jesus Christ declared that an apostle would betray him.

Jolly says that wasn't his intention. He saw the moment as a celebration of diversity, and the table on which Butch spun her tunes as a tribute to feasting and French gastronomy.

"My wish isn't to be subversive, nor to mock or to shock," Jolly said. "Most of all, I wanted to send a message of love, a message of inclusion and not at all to divide."

Still, critics couldn't unsee what they saw.

"One of the main performances of the Olympics was an LGBT mockery of a sacred Christian story - the Last Supper - the last supper of Christ. The apostles were portrayed by transvestites," the spokesperson for Russia's Foreign Ministry, Maria Zakharova, posted on Telegram.

"Apparently, in Paris they decided that since the Olympic rings are multi-colored, they can turn everything into one big gay parade," she added.

The French Catholic Church's conference of bishops deplored what it described as "scenes of derision and mockery of Christianity" and said "our thoughts are with all the Christians from all continents who were hurt by the outrage and provocation of certain scenes."

LGBTQ+ athletes, though, seemed to have a whale of a time. British diver Tom Daley posted a photo of himself recreating the standout Kate Winslet-Leonardo DiCaprio scene from "Titanic," only with the roles reversed: He was at the boat's prow with arms outstretched, as rower Helen Glover held him from behind.

Is that a revolver in your pocket?

When a giant silver dome lifted to reveal singer Philippe Katerine reclining on a crown of fruit and flowers, practically naked and painted blue, audiences who didn't think he was Papa Smurf may have guessed that he represented Dionysus, the Greek god of wine and ecstasy.

But unless they speak French, they may not have caught the cheekiness of his lyrics.

"Where to hide a revolver when you're completely naked?" he sang, pointing down to his groin. "I know where you're thinking. But that's not a good idea."

"No more rich and poor when you go back to being naked. Yes," Katerine continued.

Decades after Brigitte Bardot sang "Naked in the Sun," this was Paris' reminder that everyone starts life in their birthday suit, so where's the shame?

Paris museums are full of paintings that celebrate the human form. Gustave Courbet's "Origin of the World" hangs in the Musée d'Orsay. The 16th-century "Gabrielle d'Estrées and one of her sisters," showing one bare-breasted woman pinching the nipple of another, hangs in the Louvre.

France sends a message

Clad in a golden costume, French-Malian pop star Aya Nakamura strode confidently out of the hallowed doors of the Institut de France, a prestigious stronghold of French language, culture and commitment to freedom of thought. Even without a note being sung, the message of diversity, inclusion and Black pride was loud.

The most listened-to French-speaking artist in the world was a target of fierce attacks from extreme-right activists when her name emerged earlier this year as a possible performer at the show. Paris prosecutors opened an investigation of alleged racism targeting the singer.

Nakamura performed with musicians of the French military's Republican Guard, who danced around her.

Au revoir, closed minds and stuffy traditions.

Off with their head!

Braves end six-game losing streak with 4-0 win over Mets

NEW YORK (AP)—Spencer Schwellenbach struck out a career-best 11 over seven dominant innings of two-hit ball, and the Atlanta Braves stopped a six-game losing streak Saturday with a 4-0 victory against the New York Mets.

Marcell Ozuna and Matt Olson hit back-to-back homers in the fourth after Mets starter Tylor Megill, just brought back from the minors, retired his first 11 batters.

Orlando Arcia added an RBI single in the fifth after a leadoff walk to Sean Murphy, and Eddie Rosario went deep against Megill (2-5) leading off the seventh.

Atlanta moved back ahead of the Mets for second place in the NL East and the league's top wild card. The banged-up Braves halted their longest skid since a six-game slide in September 2017—the final week of Brian Snitker's first full season as manager. They haven't dropped seven in a row since August 2016.

Schwellenbach (4-5) completely shut down a red-hot Mets lineup as the Braves ended New York's five-game winning streak. He walked none and threw 62 of 89 pitches for strikes in his 10th major league start.

The rookie right-hander retired his final 10 batters. The only hits he permitted were doubles by Jeff McNeil in the second and Pete Alonso in the fourth.

AP

Atlanta Braves pitcher Spencer Schwellenbach (56) delivers a pitch against the New York Mets during the third inning of a baseball game, Saturday, July 27, 2024, in New York.

BLUE JAYS 7, RANGERS 3

TORONTO (AP)—Kevin Gausman pitched a four-hitter for his third complete game in 280 major league starts. Daulton Varsho had four RBIs that included three-run homer and Toronto beat Texas.

Gausman (9-8) won his third straight start and joined Atlanta's Max Fried as the only pitchers with two complete game this season. Gausman, who pitched a five-hit shutout at Oakland on June 8, struck out eight, walked three and threw 118 pitches, his most since 2016. He threw 81 pitches for strikes.

It was the 20th complete game in the major leagues this season and the first nine-inning complete game against Texas since the Los Angeles Angels' Jose Suarez on Sept. 4, 2021.

Marcus Semien tripled in the first inning and scored on a wild pitch, and Wyatt Langford hit an RBI double in the third and scored on Adolis Garcia's single. Semien scored twice but Texas lost its second straight after a five-game winning streak.

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. had three of Toronto's 15 hits and scored three runs. Alejandro Kirk had three hits and drove in a run for the Blue Jays, who won consecutive games for the first time since July 10 and 11 at San Francisco.

PADRES 9, ORIOLES 4

BALTIMORE (AP)—Michael King pitched brilliantly into the seventh inning, Manny Machado hit a three-run homer in his old ballpark and San Diego extended their winning streak to seven games with a 9-4 rout of sloppy Baltimore.

Three of San Diego's four runs off Baltimore starter Dean Kremer (4-7) were unearned as the Orioles lost for the 18th time in their last 30 games. They're still in first place in the AL East only because the New York Yankees have slumped badly as well.

King (9-6) allowed two hits and two walks in 6 1/3 innings, striking out nine. He exited with two men on base, and they both eventually scored on a double by Cedric Mullins. But that came after the Padres had already built an 8-0 lead.

Mullins also hit a two-run homer in the ninth.

With men on second and third and two outs in the second, Kyle Higashioka lifted a popup behind third base. Shortstop Gunnar Henderson appeared to be calling for it, but third baseman Ramon Urias backed under the ball and the two eventually came together. Both reached for the ball and neither caught it, and both runners scored on the error, which was charged to Ur√≠as.

RAYS 4, REDS 0

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Alex Jackson and Yandy Diaz hit consecutive home runs in a three-run fifth inning to back Zack Littell, and Tampa Bay beat Cincinnati to stop their three-game winning streak.

Jackson, who was 10 for 100 this season going into the plate appearance, hit a 407-foot homer to left on an 0-1 sweeper from Andrew Abbott (9-7) at the bottom of the strike zone, his third home run this season.

Diaz drove an 0-2 fastball to right-center for his ninth home run. Diaz returned Friday after missing seven games for personal reasons and went 1 for 5 with a single.

Amed Rosario and Brandon Lowe followed with consecutive doubles that chased Abbott, who gave up four runs and eight hits in four-plus innings.

Littell (4-7) allowed three hits and matched his season high of seven innings, striking out five and walking one. He had been 0-2 in his previous three starts.

PHILLIES 8, GUARDIANS 0

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Tyler Phillips tossed a four-hit shutout in his third-big league start, and the right-hander from South Jersey who grew up a diehard Philadelphia fan pitched them to a win over Cleveland.

Bryce Harper, Brandon Marsh and Kyle Schwarber all homered in a seven-run fourth inning. Nick Castellanos went deep in the sixth and the Phillies acquired closer Carlos Estevez as part of an eventful night at Citizens Bank Park.

The Phillies landed the 2023 All-Star Estevez hours after they placed All-Star lefty Ranger Suarez on the 15-day injured list because of soreness in his lower back.

It's the kind of move Phillips would have approved of as a Phillies fan from Lumberton, New Jersey.

Phillips improved to 3-0 and has won all three big-league starts, giving the Phillies an unexpected second-half boost in place of injured starters Taijuan Walker and Spencer Turnbull.

TIGERS 7, TWINS 2

DETROIT (AP)—Tarik Skubal gave up five hits and two runs in seven strong innings in his last start before the trade deadline and Detroit rallied to beat Minnesota.

Javier Baez homered for the third straight game and Colt Keith had a home run and a triple for three RBIs. Baez had only homered once this season before his current streak and three of his four home runs this year have come against the Twins.

Skubal (12-3) allowed three hits, including a two-run homer, in the first inning, but held the Twins to two singles over the next six. He struck out eight and walked two.

Twins starter Joe Ryan (6-7) allowed three runs on four hits in six innings. He walked one and struck out eight.

The Twins took a 2-0 lead on Royce Lewis' 11th homer in 26 games this season, but Mark Canha's RBI single made it 2-1 in the bottom of the inning.

GIANTS 4, ROCKIES 1, 1st game

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Blake Snell struck out a career-high 15 over six innings, Patrick Bailey hit a tiebreaking, two-run double and San Francisco beat Colorado Rockies in a doubleheader opener.

CUBS 9, ROYALS 4

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Patrick Wisdom hit a grand slam as a pinch hitter in the seventh inning, Seiya Suzuki also homered and Chicago beat Kansas City.

Wisdom hit for Pete Crow-Armstrong and laced the homer 440-feet off Sam Long into the fountains in left for a 7-4 lead.

The runners were put on base by Seth Lugo (12-5), who went 6 1/3 innings. He allowed six earned runs on five hits while walking two and striking out two.

Julian Merryweather (1-0) pitched an inning for the victory. Cubs starter Shota Imanaga went 5 2/3 innings, allowing three earned runs on six hits and three strikeouts.

MARLINS 7, BREWERS 3

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Josh Bell hit a three-run homer to cap a five-run rally in the seventh inning that lifted Miami to a comeback victory over Milwaukee.

Pinch-hitter Emmanuel Rivera opened the seventh with a triple. Vidal Bruj√°n walked and Nick Fortes reached on a bunt single that pitcher Jared Koenig couldn't corral, scoring Rivera to tie it at 3.

Xavier Reynolds advanced the runners with a sacrifice, chasing Koenig (8-2), who had not allowed a run in his seven previous outings.

MARINERS 6, WHITE SOX 3

CHICAGO (AP)—Jorge Polanco hit two solo homers and added an RBI single to help Seattle beat Chicago.

The Mariners remained a game behind first-place Houston in the AL West.

Cal Raleigh cracked his team-leading 21st homer, and Victor Robles had three hits and an RBI as Seattle won its second straight and handed major league-worst Chicago its 13th consecutive loss, one short it the team record. The Mariners, who once led the division by 10 games, have just three wins in their last 11.

All-Star Randy Arozarena made his Seattle debut, batting second and playing left field after being acquired from Tampa Bay on Thursday. The 2021 AL Rookie of the Year went 1 for 4 with an infield single, a walk and two strikeouts.

ASTROS 7, DODGERS 6

HOUSTON (AP)—Alex Bregman hit a game-ending homer off Blake Treinen in the ninth inning that sailed over the left-field train tracks, and Houston overcame Shohei Ohtani's National League-leading 32nd home run to beat Los Angeles.

Houston trailed 5-0 in the sixth and 6-4 in the eighth before Yainer Diaz tripled off Daniel Hudson, and Jeremy Pe√±a and Jon Singleton hit RBI singles.

Bregman drove a 1-0 sinker from Treinen (5-3) that went 407 feet for his 14th home run.

Josh Hader (4-5) pitched a perfect ninth for the Astros (55-49), who have won three straight and 22 of 33.

Los Angeles (62-44) has lost three of four following a five-game winning streak.

DIAMONDBACKS 9, PIRATES 5

PHOENIX (AP)—Ketel Marte homered and had three RBIs, pinch hitter Joc Pederson hit a two-run double and Arizona stretched their winning streak to four games with a victory over Pittsburgh.

Jake McCarthy went 5 for 5 with an RBI and Arizona had 13 hits to win for the 10th time in 13 games. The Diamondbacks have won or split eight straight series.

The Diamondbacks jumped on the Pirates early, taking a 4-1 lead after Marte's two-run homer and Corbin Carroll's solo shot.

Oneil Cruz hit a 472-foot homer in the first inning and the Pirates tied it at 4 with three runs in the fifth inning off Brandon Pfaadt (5-6).

It was all Arizona after that.

YANKEES 11, RED SOX 8, 10 INNINGS

BOSTON (AP)—Gleyber Torres' two-run double capped a three-run 10th inning, Aaron Judge hit his 37th homer as he reached base a career-high six times and New York rallied past Boston.

In a game that was tied five times, matching the most in the major leagues this season, New York led 3-0 and 4-3, and Boston went ahead 5-4, 6-5 and 8-6.

Judge homered for the second straight night to raise his big league-leading total, had four RBIs and tied a career best with his 10th four-hit game.

Juan Soto combined with Judge in the first inning for back-to-back homers for the third time this season, hitting his 27th. Trent Grisham tied the score 8-8 with two outs in the ninth with a double that clanked off the Green Monster on a 2-2 pitch from Kenley Jansen.

Austin Wells hit a sacrifice fly off Chase Anderson (0-2) in the 10th and Torres, who had been 0 for 5, doubled off the base of the Green Monster.

Freddie Cataluna captures SGA June ace

By MARK RABAGO
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EDITOR

Freddie Cataluna won the Saipan Golfers Association June tournament after leaderboard topnotcher Nick Sablan wasn't eligible to claim the victory last June 23 at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort west course.

Sablan, a former national golfer, set the net score to beat with his 71 (37-40, gross of 77), but the 6-handicapper already won last March that disqualified him from further SGA monthly glory.

Cataluna, meanwhile, had to fend off Rick Kautz via scorecard tiebreak to take the June plum with a net 74. The 56-year-old businessman and 3-handicapper managed to tie Sablan's round best gross score of 77 after going 39 in the front and 38 in the back nine.

Kautz, for his part, arrived on his net 74 after shooting a 41-44 for a gross score of 85 for the 11-handicapper.

"Weather was OK that day. I think I had three or four birdies but also one or two bad holes. It's my short game that I had problem lately, especially putting," said Cataluna about his June tourney performance.

The Iloilo, Philippines native then dedicated his win to his wife Lea and their four children. "For being very supportive to my golf hobby.

He said he recently joined the SGA because he wants to learn more about the sport from club mainstays Sablan and Edward Manibusan, adding he also has a lot of friends at SGA. Cataluna said he's also looking forward to representing the club in Philippine Airlines' PAL Interclub golf tournament set for February next year in the Philippines.

Wit the June victory, Cataluna now joins the 2024 SGA Ace of the Month winners—Larry Deleon Guerrero (January), Alex Tudela (February), Sablan (March), Das Krishnan (April), and Joe Sablan (May).

In the closest to the pin competition, Kautz took the victory on hole No. 4, while Cataluna swept holes No. 7, 11, and 16. In the longest drive, Ton Tomokane and Jung Eun Teack brought the lumber in holes No. 3 and 10.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Freddie Cataluna, shown in this file photo, was named the Saipan Golfers Association June tournament winner last June 23 at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort west course.

COACH

From page 16

cially true in the women's relay events in the 2024 Micro Games as the eventual times of all participating relay teams ended up so close to one another.

"That's why we were very serious and careful in selecting the four women's swimmers. We held a selection time trial before the relay events to decide on the final members. In fact, the NMI women's team would have lost several gold medals if we didn't choose the right swimmers. We verified each result before any relay and decided on the swimmers each time. That's the hard work of our whole staff members. I was in charge of race predictions and analysis, coach David [Roberto Jr.] was in charge of instructing and checking the relay transition practice, and [team manager] Yuko [Kimura] was in charge of video shooting and time compilation. These eventually all bore fruit, leading to the remarkable achievement of winning all relay races, both male and female, and contributing greatly to the NMI's overall medal tally," he said.

That's why in the end, Kimura's blood boiled when he learned that Nauru came in a close second place in the final medal tally as it got its medal rush from weightlifting and the CNMI only won the medal tally by two gold medals.

"I was relieved that our selection of relay members was right.'

Aside from exhibiting the ultimate sign of teamwork by winning all the relay events, Kimura said another key for Team NMI was their performance on Day 1 of the swimming events and how this propelled them to dominate swimming in the Micro Games.

"The NMI team gained momentum by winning relay races one after another, but there was another secret strategy to generate momentum. That was conquering all the events on the Day 1. Day 1 was also the day the swimming opening ceremony was held, so there were only four events, but how much momentum did conquering the first day bring to the NMI? Did it leave a big impact on other countries? That can't be measured. Therefore, we concentrated all our efforts on Day 1."

While he's sure there were many other factors in Team NMI's remarkable gold rush in the Micronesian Games, there's no doubt that developing a group of athletes who could win in relays led to this great achievement and hopefully would serve them in good stead for future swimming events.

"Next year's Pacific Mini Games in Palau will be a tough one for the NMI swim team as we will have to face the loss of Isaiah, Kean, and Taiyo [Akimaru], who are our main swimmers. It won't go like the 2023 Pacific Games. However, there is still one year left, so we will do our best to achieve good results in Palau, too!"

Last but not the least, Kimura said CNMI swimming's success in the 2024 Micronesian wouldn't have been possible without the help from all the sponsors of Team Marianas, Northern Marianas Sports Association, Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation, Aqua Resort Club, Pacific Islands Club Saipan, and the Tan family.

NMI

From page 16

that raged on the pitch.

There were many chances for the NMI to score a goal in the first half, but fell short multiple times. After a lot of back-and-forth action, Guam ended up having the advantage after securing two goals before the end of the first half for a 2-0 lead.

In the second half, the NMI team waged a comeback that led to their eventual victory. First, Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez found the back of the net after a strong kick past multiple Guam defenders in the 63rd minute to cut the lead in half, 1-2.

Then, Jannah Casarino tied the game up in the 83rd minute after she escaped two Guam defenders. She found the right corner of the net as Guam's keeper made a last-minute and failed stretch attempt to stop the ball.

It was still anybody's game, but when it came down to it—and as emotions were at an all-time high with just a few minutes on the clock left—the NMI completed the comeback win when Chavez secured a penalty kick after being fouled in the 84th minute for a 3-2 final.

Last Friday, they took that momentum and blanked Mongolia, 2-0.

They dominated the young Mongolian team after Chavez found the back of the net yet again in the 13th minute to open the game up.

Mongolia succumbed to their third straight loss after the NMI's Tamia Kileleman-Hix scored the second goal for a 2-0 final and bagged their third straight win.

At press time, the NMI team is taking on the Guam team again for the last game of the tourney. Results of that game will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

After their nail-biter last Thursday, NMI's head coach Luam Khen Koo said that it felt "very good" to complete the comeback and said that it was a big effort from the team. "Even down by two goals at the first half, we still played very well," he said.

On the tournament so far and the team's performance, he said, "They've been working very hard, so they deserve it. It's a good game of soccer." In future tournaments, he said that he hopes the team can replicate the success it's had in this tourney. "We've been working on that. For the last three years, they've been playing very well," said Koo.

Chavez, for her part, said that team captain Khristelle Itaas and Casarino helped make their comeback happen. "All I did was finish it, but they worked hard for it," she said.

Itaas, on their comeback after being down 2-0, said, "It definitely lifted up our confidence… I think we worked really hard to recompose ourselves and encourage each other to make sure we keep fighting, and we were able to make the three goals."

If this was an unexpected comeback, she said, "We just wanted to score in the beginning—we were trying to high press and try to get a goal back."

For Casarino, she said, "Our coach expected it. Coach Koo had a lot of faith in us. When we were sitting here during our half time, he was like, 'you guys got it. You guys can score. I have faith in you—you have to have faith in yourself. And I think that really lifted our spirits."

Chavez then thanked the supporters that cheered them on. "Without you guys, we wouldn't have been able to make a comeback."

BELT

From page 16

if I'm the first female jiu-jitsu black belt in the CNMI, but if I am, It's truly an honor! I feel a sense of pride, accomplishment and gratitude for those who have been supporting me along the way."

She said that it's been a longstanding vision of hers. "I knew very early that I'd be committed to this sport for life. It has not been easy, even until now it tests my discipline, and my physical and mental capabilities. The sport has been challenging yet incredibly rewarding."

"I am excited to continue my martial arts journey and further hone my skills as a black belt. Ultimately, I hope to share the knowledge and experience I've gained as a competitor. This journey has already opened new doors of opportunity and inspired me to set even higher goals.

I've competed twice since receiving my black belt, achieving third place in the San Diego Open and second place in Master International North America," she said.

Her inspiration throughout her journey is her professor, Beret Yoshida. "He consistently turns the seemingly impossible into reality, reminding me that with persistence and dedication, anything is achievable. Additionally, my peers motivate and challenge me to reach my full potential," said Cruz.

Looking ahead, she said, "I hope to inspire the next generation of martial artists, especially in the Marianas, and anyone interested in starting jiu-jitsu or any martial art."

Cruz shared some benefits to training: Physical activity, self-defense, and a creative outlet or a way to express yourself. "I am happy if I can inspire some people and encourage them to reach for their full potential," she said.

She then thanked her family and friends back home who have followed her journey. "I hope it inspires you to pursue your passions. I am truly grateful for the opportunities and experiences that jiu-jitsu has brought into my life, shaping me into the person I am today."

Cruz, who is friends with the owners of the new Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu academy on Saipan—Saipan Submissions Academy—said that she is excited that it's opened up.

"I'm excited to know that Saipan has a new BJJ academy, especially one with the same roots as myself. I can only imagine the benefits of a new academy on Saipan. Not only is it opening new opportunities for the community in the south, but is also a way to improve the current jiu-jitsu level on the island," she said. "I hope the new presence will spike some interest and bring up potential athletes from the CNMI. No matter your goals, I believe that focusing on a discipline is a great way to build character and to become a better version of yourself. Congratulations to my longtime friend and training partner Bryan [Deleon Guerrero] on opening his academy. I can attest that he is an exemplary instructor with much experience to share to newcomers and competitive practitioners. I expect to see more sports news mentioning Jiu-Jitsu on Saipan.

Cruz graduated high school in 2010 and college at the Northern Marianas College in 2013. She left for San Diego, California in 2015 and still resides there today. Cruz started jiu-jitsu training when she was 24 years old.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Baltimore	61	43	.587	–
New York	61	45	.575	1
Boston	55	48	.534	5½
Tampa Bay	53	52	.505	8½
Toronto	48	56	.462	13
Central Division				
Cleveland	62	42	.596	–
Minnesota	57	46	.553	4½
Kansas City	57	48	.543	5½
Detroit	52	54	.491	11
Chicago	27	80	.252	36½
West Division				
Houston	55	49	.529	–
Seattle	55	51	.519	1
Texas	51	54	.486	4½
Los Angeles	45	60	.429	10½
Oakland	44	63	.411	12½

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	65	39	.625	–
Atlanta	55	48	.534	9½
New York	55	49	.529	10
Washington	49	56	.467	16½
Miami	39	66	.371	26½
Central Division				
Milwaukee	59	45	.567	–
St. Louis	53	51	.510	6
Pittsburgh	52	52	.500	7
Cincinnati	50	54	.481	9
Chicago	50	56	.472	10
West Division				
Los Angeles	62	44	.585	–
San Diego	57	50	.533	5½
Arizona	55	50	.524	6½
San Francisco	52	55	.486	10½
Colorado	38	68	.358	24

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canada tops Giannis and Greece on Day 1 of hoops tilt

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NMI comes back for 3-2 win over Guam

LEIGH GASES
The NMI's Aubrey Castro gears back for a kick during their game against Guam in the NMIFA Women's U21 Three Nations Cup at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville last Thursday.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The NMI Women's National Team is on fire as they won all three matches and are undefeated as of last Friday in the NMIFA Women's U21 Three Nations Cup at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Their most notable win was the comeback thriller over Guam last Thursday, 3-2.

Throughout the match, the on-and-off again drizzle coated the pitch with a sleek layer of rain, but that didn't stop both teams from going at it with everything they had. It mirrored both teams' intensity as the rain and the cheers from the stands melded into a cacophony of background music for the battle of supremacy

» Remains perfect after again beating MNG, 2-0

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Coach Hiro shares secrets of swim team's success

By MARK RABAGO
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EDITOR

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Coach Hiro Kimura, left, poses with the CNMI National Swimming Team along with co-coaches David Roberto Jr. and Richard Sikkel and Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation vice president John Hirsh.

Hiroyuki Kimura was able to check off one from his bucket list after guiding the CNMI National Swimming Team's gold medal rush in the 2024 Micronesian Games in Kwajalein, Republic of Marshall Islands.

"The Micro Games has been one of the important targets of my coaching career. As a member of Team Marianas, I don't want to lose. This is because it's a competition that makes me wish strongly, 'Let NMI take the top spot in the medal tally!" To make it, we have to win all the gold medals in swimming and contribute to Team Marianas. With this in mind, I have been training our swimmers for half a year after the Pacific Games in the Solomon Islands," the CNMI national swimming coach recently told *Saipan Tribune*.

Kimura said he never doubted the outcome as he had 100% confidence on the CNMI national swimming team coming into the 10th edition of the Micro Games.

"This was the first time in the history of Micro Games swimming competitions that one country won 49 gold medals. This was an amazing historic achievement. hHowever, it was a result that was meant to be achieved."

He then explained how organizers putting a premium on swimming events during the quadrennial event aided in Team CNMI's historic performance in the Kwajalein Pool.

"There were 20 individual swimming events, including open water races, for each gender. There were five relay events for each gender and we had also a mixed relay, in which two men and two women teamed up. Mixed relay had five events. There were 55 events in total and we won 49 of them."

He continued, "athletics and swimming are the sports which have a large number of events, not only all events for each gender, but there is also a wide variety of distances and competition characteristics. Mass production of medals in these two sports contributed to the NMI's medal tally."

Kimura said all CNMI national swimmers—Maria Batallones, Frances Raho, Justin Ma, Isaiah Aleksenko, Kean Pajarillaga, Kouki Watanabe, Richard Zhao, Shoko Litulumar, Sari Barman, Maria Guerrero, Nagi Tenorio, and Michael Miller—played important roles in the swimming team accumulating a total of 78 medals (49 gold medals, 15 silver, and 14 bronze) in this past Micro Games.

"The NMI's top swimmers, such as Isaiah, Kean, Kouki, Maria, Frances, and Shoko were expected to win gold medals in individual events, but even if only these swimmers performed well, we wouldn't have achieved our goal to win as many medals as we wanted. It's because it will be no good if we don't win in the relays. Winning in the relays gives the team momentum. Relays involve four swimmers. No matter how fast the three swimmers are, if one swimmer is slow, there is a high risk of missing out on the gold medal in the relay. Therefore, it was absolutely necessary to develop a fourth swimmer."

Kimura said this was espe-

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Marilyn Cruz earns black belt in Brazilian jiu-jitsu

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Marilyn Cruz poses with her black belt in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Saipan daughter Marilyn Cruz has reached the highest level of expertise in Brazilian jiu-jitsu and now has a black belt to show for it.

Last May, Cruz was bestowed the black belt under the tutelage of Baret Yoshida from Team Baret Submissions—a prominent American figure in jiu-jitsu and a world no-gi champion at The Training Center in San Diego.

She has a long list of accolades in the sport she's trained in for almost a decade, and with discipline and persistence, she has earned her black belt.

With earning the black belt, she said, "I don't know

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